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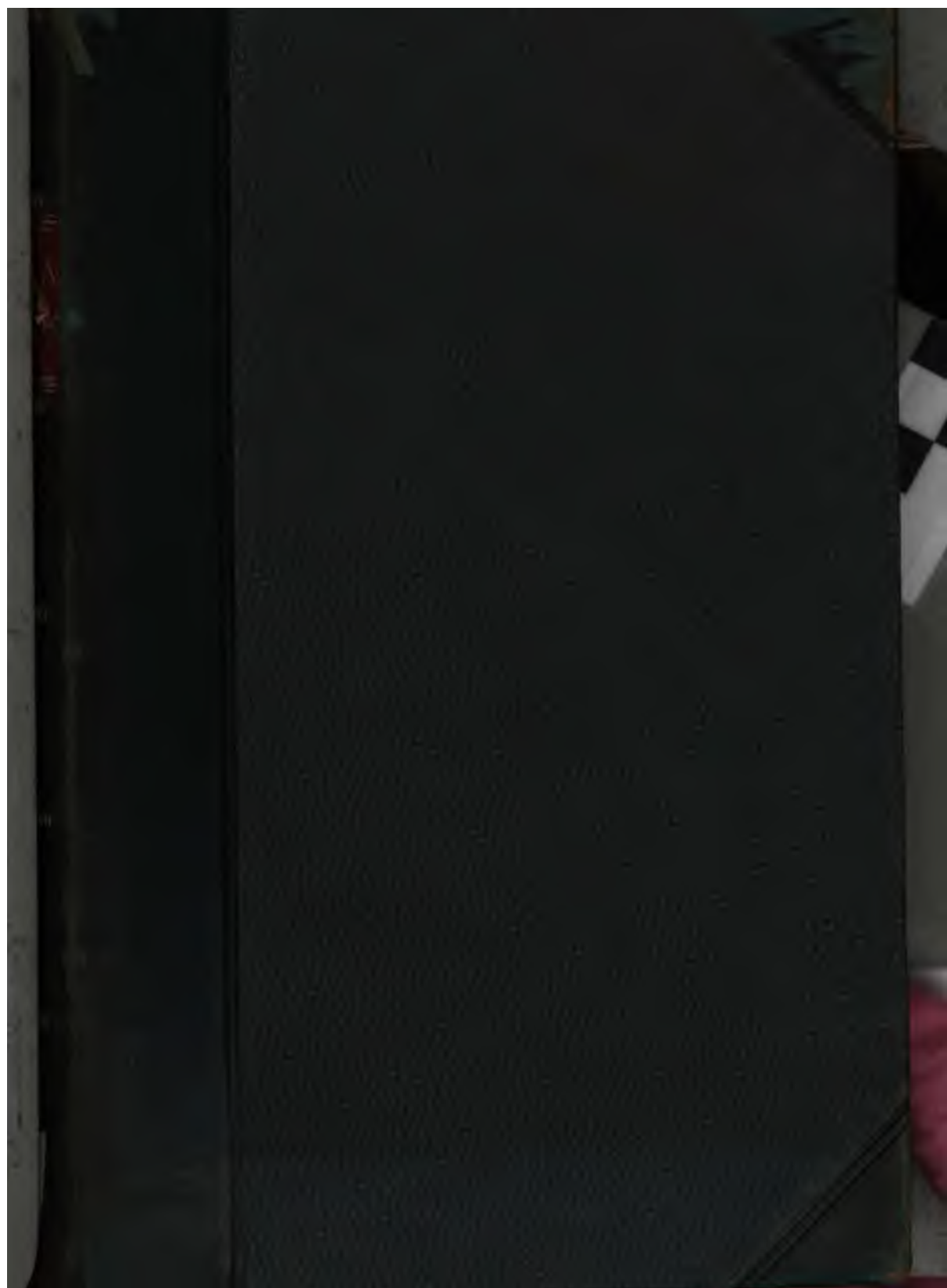
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BELGRAVIA.

JULY 1879.

Donna Quirote.

BY JUSTIN MCCARTHY.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SUNSTROKE.

A TRAVELLER in a tropical country goes about for days, or months, and braves the sun and the climate, and suffers nothing; perhaps, if he be of a specially hardy mould, scarcely thinks about such a thing as danger. Suddenly one day he is cleft down by a sunstroke. Why that day more than another? The conditions were the same to all appearance for him all the days before. So many days that could be counted, so many sun-rays that could not be counted, had shone on his unharmed head; and why on this one particular day does this one particular ray cleave him down? Was that sunbeam charged from all eternity before to do the work, as Madame de Sévigné declares the cannon-ball to have been that struck down the great Turenne?

The question is asked now *à propos* only of so unhistoric and unimportant a person as Clarkson Fielding. He had been out and about the world for many years, young as he still was; he had been his own master almost since he was a boy; he had seen many countries; he was fond of making acquaintances everywhere; he must have met and known, on a moderate computation, some hundreds of pretty women, and he had never until now felt one real thrill or pang of love. It is unreasonable to suppose that many of these women were not handsomer and cleverer than Gabrielle Vanthorpe; and yet it was the ray from Gabrielle's kindly eyes that gave him his sunstroke. The thing might not have been surprising if he were one who disliked women and kept aloof from them, and was at last drawn, or dragged, into companionship with a woman, and so fell the easier victim. It

DONNA QUIXOTE.

would not have been surprising if he were one who had a low opinion of women generally, and was at length suddenly forced to see that there was one woman at least deserving of a better judgment. But Fielding had always liked the society of women, so long as they were easy and agreeable. He liked to be on pleasant terms of *camaraderie* with an intelligent woman of any class; and even if she were not particularly intelligent, as in the case of Janet Charlton, he liked her if she were genial and friendly. He was never conscious of having been shy or constrained in the society of women: there never was a time when he could not have looked a girl straight in the face; there never was, until now, a time when his pulse would have quickened by one beat at meeting or parting with a woman, except as it might have quickened at meeting or parting with some man, his friend. Not that he had not had flirtations and what are called love affairs. He was far too curious a student of human nature not to put himself in the way of such experiences; but he had never found his rest much disturbed by them. The moment he saw Gabrielle Vanthorpe he fell in love with her. It did not even take him long to be conscious of the full of what had happened.

He did not by any means like the new sensation. It disturbed him; it was opposed to all his ways; it marred his easy enjoyment of life; it was a new and strange element disarranging the established economy of his irresponsible existence. He had known himself, or had fancied he knew himself, for some time, and had never supposed he could turn into a fond lover. Besides, when the new sensation came, it seemed utterly out of the question to suppose it could lead to anything more than simple disturbance to himself. He did not even stop for one moment to contemplate the possibility of Gabrielle Vanthorpe falling in love with him, and marrying him. It may as well, indeed, be said that if the possibility had occurred to his mind at the earlier stages of their acquaintance, it would have brought him little comfort. He did not want to be married; he did not think he was by any means the sort of person to undertake the responsibility of a married life. It seemed to him as much out of keeping with all his schemes and ideas of existence, as to be governor of the Bank of England, or Chancellor of the Exchequer. How was a man to know, he had sometimes thought in other days, whether he would like to be married or not? A woman might be very good company for an hour or two, but every day and for ever? He rather sympathised with the American lady who declined to get married on the ground that she couldn't have a man always *at her heels*. He did not feel the least anxiety to have

a woman always dangling at his heels. It would be intolerable when the thing was done to know that it could not be undone, and had to be tolerated.

Therefore, when Fielding became conscious of the new sensation, he chafed against it vehemently. He tried hard to shake himself loose of it; perhaps we may say to laugh himself out of it. He tried not to believe in it. For a while he really did not, or would not, believe in it. Death is a thing for others, not for us—that we all know. The strange new pain that would seem to us significant beyond misapprehension for another, cannot be death for us—oh, no, it is impossible; it is this, it is that, it cannot be death. So it was at first with Fielding and his new sensation. It could not be love: absurd, impossible. But after a little there was no mistaking the thing; and Fielding looked the reality fairly in the face, and saw that his time too had come, and that the whole conditions of his life had changed. Not poppy, nor mandragora, could ever again steep his senses so in forgetfulness that the time to come should be as the time that was now gone for ever.

Perhaps the worst of it was that the past life seemed now as barren in his eyes as the future. It seemed far worse: it seemed odious as well as barren. He hated the recollection of the experiences he had gone through; the pitiful amusements, the ignoble companionships, the worthless enterprises, the vapid love of change, the selfish pursuit of pleasures and whims—and oh, such tasteless pleasures, such paltry whims! His brother now seemed to him a thousand times superior, for all his oddities and his nonsense. Wilberforce had some purposes of practical good, at least. He bustled and fussed and busied himself about schemes which, if they came to anything, would do good to somebody. Nobody on earth would be the better for his, Clarkson Fielding's, having lived; or need care twopence if he were dead.

It is perhaps needless to say that some, at least, of Fielding's respect for the schemes of Sir Wilberforce came from his observation of the respect with which Gabrielle Vanthorpe listened to them. Gabrielle, as we know, held nothing alien from her which in the slightest degree concerned the good, or even the comfort, of a man and a brother; and she had always listened with an interest, the more flattering because it was genuine, to Sir Wilberforce's expositions of the good he was about to confer on civilised mankind, by his various applications of practical science to the improvement of the conditions of every-day life. Fielding began to grow more and more full of regard for Wilberforce. In proportion to the strength of his old reluctance to come near his brother was now the revulsion of feeling towards him. Through

half his life Fielding had made up his mind that his elder brother disliked him, and was glad to be rid of him, and would be sorry to see him again; and now that he found Wilberforce so simple, so straightforward, so affectionate in his peculiar way, the heart of the younger man went out towards him with a remorseful tenderness. No one could have obliged Fielding more than by trying to injure Sir Wilberforce, and giving him, Fielding, a chance of getting at the wrong-doer. He felt as if he ought to be taking care of Wilberforce, who was so much his senior; for there was something unspeakably boyish, not to say childlike, in Wilberforce's oddities and fads, and unnecessary unresting activity.

'Tell you what, Clarkson,' the elder said one day as they were leaving Gabrielle Vanthorpe, 'that's one of the nicest women I know. You don't think so, no? why not, Clarkson? why not?'

'I didn't say she wasn't one of the nicest women I knew,' Fielding said; 'I think she is the best woman I ever saw, and the most beautiful too, and the cleverest, and the sweetest, and the dearest—and anything else you like, Wilberforce. I'm open to a competition to see who can say the most in her praise, like two of the shepherds in Virgil singing the praises of some idyllic girl.'

'No, I don't think I'll venture to compete, Clarkson—you had always more of the literary turn than I, my boy; and I never could care anything about these things of Virgil; stupidest things in the world they seem to me: I suppose you do really like them, since you say you do; but I give you my word, I never could see anything in them but silly stuff, don't you know?'

'What do they prove, after all?' Clarkson asked ironically, thinking of Newton and 'Paradise Lost.'

'Exactly,' Wilberforce said very contentedly; 'there it is; what do they prove? Why, look here, Clarkson, these Romans, do you know, with their poets, and their Tityruses, and Amaryllises, and all that lot, they hadn't a chimney to their houses. Call that greatness? I don't.'

'Well, if I don't agree with you in all that, I do agree with you about Mrs. Vanthorpe, Wilberforce; I think her a charming woman, and a woman with a character and a heart.'

'Glad to hear you say so, Clarkson; you have seen the world and cities and all that, like who is it—Ulysses or somebody—and you ought to be a judge of character. A man might do worse than marry Mrs. Vanthorpe; eh, Clarkson, don't you think so?'

Fielding was surprised at this remark, and looked into his brother's face. Wilberforce was quite unmoved.

'Tell you what, Clarkson, I wish she would marry me; I do indeed. I am not much of a marrying man; but I suppose a man

will be expected to marry some time or other. It's a sort of social duty one owes, I take it; people will look for it; and I think it is about time for me to be making up my mind. I am not like you with all the world before me; I'm getting on, you know. I have been thinking of this a good deal lately; ever since I came to know her.'

Fielding murmured out something about its being very natural and very proper, and doing equal honour to the head and heart of somebody; he did not exactly explain whom he meant. He was indeed much bewildered.

'She's the nicest woman I ever knew,' Sir Wilberforce went on; 'much the nicest. She has no stuff and nonsense about her; and she takes an interest in things; I never knew so young a woman take such an interest in things. She would make a capital wife. A deuced deal younger than I am, of course; but I don't think that is a matter of any consequence; and then, having been left a widow all at once, you know, there's a kind of gravity about her, so that one doesn't think of her exactly as if she were a mere girl, you know; and there wouldn't appear all the discrepancy that there is.'

Fielding had indeed often noticed that the peculiar conditions of her life had given a sort of sweet gravity to Gabrielle's manner that made her seem less young, less like a girl, than she really was. Still, the idea of a marriage between her and Sir Wilberforce seemed to him something preposterous.

'Of course, this is all between ourselves, Clarkson; I have only been thinking of it in a vague sort of way, you know; I wouldn't mention it to anyone but you for all the world. I don't know, of course, whether she would have me. I am not the sort of fellow a handsome young woman would be likely to fall in love with; I know that pretty well, not being quite a fool, Clarkson. But then I could offer her a good position, you know, and money enough; and I fancy I shouldn't make half a bad husband; and a woman might do worse, mightn't she, Clarkson? eh, eh? don't you think so?'

Clarkson really did think so. He thought a woman might do a great deal worse than marry his honest, kindly, fussy brother; and he said as much with emphasis.

'Thank you, Clarkson; thank you very much; I know you mean what you say.—Well, we'll think it over. You know, when one has gone to all this trouble, and has had all these houses arranged as perfectly as the practical science of the day can make them, one is bound, I suppose, to put a woman over them, isn't he? people will expect it; people will expect it. Don't you think so?'

The conversation threw Fielding into a contemplative mood. That was one of the nights when he first went back to his old

lodgings in Bolingbroke Place. He found his way into his den unseen and unnoticed by the Charltons, or any one, and he began, almost without thinking of it, to put a few things together, as a man does who is preparing for a journey. Would she marry Wilberforce? he kept asking himself. Why not? There could hardly be a better fellow; and it would be absurd to suppose that any woman in Gabrielle's position could be wholly indifferent to the attractions of a title and great wealth. And what if she did marry Wilberforce? why should he, Fielding, feel in any way astonished, or shocked, or grieved? He had not thought of the possibility of her marrying any one, but was it at all likely she would remain, or be allowed to remain, in mere unmeaning widowhood all her life? She was only a girl yet; why should she not marry?

Exactly; why should she not? Yet the thought of such a thing seemed to make Fielding weary of the sun; seemed to make the stars lose their fire. His impulse was to go away; go away at once, and never come back. With all his joyous temperament, his general good spirits, and his indomitable ease and familiarity of manner to all comers, he had a great deal of nervousness and sensitiveness in his composition, and was liable to intervals of profound depression. There is a preposterous Englishman in a once famous French novel, of whom it is told that his mother always called him 'poor sensitive;' such was the tender and delicate melancholy of his insular nature; he was, if we are not mistaken, a Lancashireman. Now, Fielding's young mother, while greatly amused at this French idea of a typical Lancashireman—a class of person towards whom she felt but slight attraction—was yet pleased to discern in her boy, even at his thoughtless years, something of that sensitive nature, so rare among Englishmen, and she loved to call him 'poor sensitive.' Some of her friends laughed at her, seeing how healthy, strong, and fearless the boy was growing up, seeing that there never was a dog, however uncouth or savage, that he could not play with at first sight; not a colt he could not ride; no man or woman he could not question and get into talk with. But the mother knew something about the true nature of her boy, for all that. She had had the benefit of all his little confidences; she had known how he would creep into her arms and cry because of supposed slights that no one but she ever thought he had felt; because of pathetic scenes or suggestions that no one but she could ever have fancied likely to touch him. She had known how some music affected him; and some lines of poetry. She had known him to be so much affected by a little poem he once found in a country newspaper that she had to steal it away from him, to keep him from reading it again and again, and always with tears, although

the poem did not contain a single allusion to the stock subjects of the pathetic by which children are commonly affected. The lines were from some collection of poems with which she was not acquainted, and no name was attached to them in the newspaper; but Fielding found out years and years after that they were by William Blake. His mother was not so far wrong when she called him poor sensitive, half in jest, half in earnest, after the man in the 'Juif Errant.' It was this very sensitiveness which nobody but his mother saw in him that drove him away from his father's house in resentment of fancied slights, in anticipation of injustice that he now saw would never have been done.

Yet he rallied again after the talk with Wilberforce, and schooled himself into a saner mood, and he went back to his brother's house, and visited Gabrielle again, as we have seen, and resolved to think no more of the matter. But he was greatly hurt at first by Gabrielle's manner to him the morning when she bade him defiance in defence of the beauteous Paulina; and he went back to his den that night, and tried a joyous supper with the Charltons, and made up his mind that he must leave England at once. It was not any better with him when, thinking over all that had passed, he began to see that Gabrielle had been very much in the right, and had shown, even in her unwisdom and her quixotry, just that chivalrous spirit which he so much admired in her. The more foolish her conduct appeared in a worldly sense, the more generous, the more truly like herself it showed to him. He began to think how very like she was to the kind of ideal character which, in his days of fanciful boyhood, he used to set out as the model on which to mould himself. He began to be sentimental and egotistic then and there, and to declare that she was like his better self—that Providence had sent her to be a better self to him; and that only perverse chance, and the world, and the devil, could have come between him and her. But this highflown mood soon sank, fell into the marsh of reality. 'She doesn't care for me; not one straw,' he told himself; 'I know that well enough: why should she? how could she? I have never done anything such a woman could care about. Wilberforce is a thousand times a better fellow in every sense. I wish she had never brought us together—such a good fellow as he is; and now the moment I have found him, I must lose him again. I wish I had never seen her. I was happy before I saw her—oh, no, I was not. I can only be happy by remembering her. What an ass I am!'

This was the only conclusion at all satisfactory at which he could arrive. There are two famous mortals whom the magic of woman translates into the form of the ass. One is Bully Bottom;

the other, and much older, is the hero of Apuleius. Bottom did not know of his ass's head; his elder brother in misfortune was only too conscious of the change that had been wrought in him. Some thought of this was whimsically passing through the brain of Fielding. 'At least,' he said, 'I am like the fellow in Apuleius; if I am an ass, I know it.'

CHAPTER XX.

SIR WILBERFORCE'S INTERVENTION.

WHEN the excitement of her discussion with Fielding was over, and she had formally proclaimed herself the protectress of Paulina against the world, Gabrielle began to feel a little dispirited and blank. She was convinced that she had been in the right, and that she could not have acted otherwise; but she was sorry to have had to act in any way that might offend Fielding. She became more and more sorry for it as, during the course of the next day or two, Paulina kept insinuating explanations of Fielding's dislike of her in a manner which was not clear enough to challenge any comment, and which Gabrielle felt she had better decline to encourage by any manner of notice. She felt herself more inclined every hour to shrink from close contact with Paulina. The house seemed to have been made unwholesome by the strange woman's presence. Gabrielle lay awake at nights thinking with a strong sense of repugnance that Paulina was sleeping not very far off.

Fielding she did not expect to see soon again. She could not even desire to see him as long as Paulina remained in the house. It was a great sacrifice, she thought, to have displeased him for the sake of Paulina. Yet she could not bring herself to believe that it was any part of her duty to accept unproved accusations against this poor outcast of respectability, or to turn Paulina out of doors as a sacrifice to the proprieties and the conventionalities of the world. But like all women, even the strongest and bravest, she felt it a terrible trial to have to stand up alone against the opinions of her little world. She could not but remember too that, of all men she had ever met, Fielding seemed the least likely to be governed by any servile regard for the mere conventionalities of society.

It was a great relief to her when one morning she saw Sir Wilberforce ride up to her gate. He looked so stout and strong, so healthy and rosy, as he checked his horse and was preparing to dismount, that his very presence seemed an antidote against morbid thoughts and fearsome misgivings. She remembered at that moment a saying of Lady Honeybell's—'Eh, my dear, your

woman's-rights theory and your woman's independence are all very well for fair weather; but when anything is going wrong, it's a great comfort to have a man in the house to advise with.' Sir Wilberforce seemed to be just the sort of man a woman would like to have in the house under any untoward circumstances requiring firm counsel. Gabrielle found herself almost admiring him as she saw him get off his horse; and she went promptly to her drawing-room to welcome him. If he had been at all a vain man, he might, with such purposes as he had communicated to his brother, have drawn cheering auguries from the evident pleasure with which Gabrielle received him.

'Mrs. Vanthorpe, can you tell me what has become of my brother Clarkson? he hasn't turned up now for two days.'

Gabrielle felt confused somehow, she could not tell why. Perhaps she wondered why Sir Wilberforce should have asked her anything about his brother.

'He sometimes goes off to the place he used to live in—the place where you saw him first,' Sir Wilberforce explained; 'but he always came back the next morning. Don't know why he ever went there, I'm sure; said it kept up his title to independence, or something of the kind; queer fellow, Clarkson; always was; you understand his ways as well as I do, Mrs. Vanthorpe, I dare say. But this time he hasn't come back, and I haven't heard anything about him, and I ask you, Mrs. Vanthorpe, because the last time I saw him he told me he was going to call on you—two days ago.'

'But, Sir Wilberforce, you don't think, I hope, that we have been murdering him secretly, Miss Elvin and I?'

'No, no, I can assure you; nothing of the kind; never thought of such a thing, give you my honour. But did he call on you that day?'

'Yes, he was here for a short time,' Gabrielle said, remembering with a sort of compunction that they had had something like a quarrel; 'and I am afraid we did not part the very best of friends, Sir Wilberforce; but that wouldn't account for his not going back to your house, would it?'

'You didn't part the best of friends? how was that, I should like to know. I hope it wasn't Clarkson's fault. I don't think it could have been, Mrs. Vanthorpe, if you'll pardon me for saying so much; because, don't you know, Clarkson thinks the world and all of you. You should hear him talk.'

'It was not his fault altogether, Sir Wilberforce; but I don't think it was all my fault either.'

'Tell us all about it,' Sir Wilberforce said, with a good-humoured bluntness, drawing a seat close to her and bestowing

himself to listen, as if her consenting to tell him all about it were a mere matter of course.

Gabrielle, now sadly in want of a confidant, was only too glad to get one of Sir Wilberforce's mature years. She had been making up her mind to send for Major Leven; she had almost thought of going to Mrs. Leven and appealing to her feelings. Now she did not attempt to resist Sir Wilberforce's frank appeal; and she told him the whole story, beginning pretty well at the beginning, so far as she knew it. She told him what Clarkson had advised her to do with Paulina, and wound up by asking simply, 'Now, Sir Wilberforce, you know it all—and what am I to do with this poor woman?'

Sir Wilberforce thought the matter gravely over, and shook his head more than once.

'I fancy Clarkson was right, you know,' he said at last; 'he must have known a deal more about her than you or I, Mrs. Vanthorpe; and he isn't an unkindly fellow, Clarkson.'

'But he says she really is what she professes to be—she really is my brother's widow, Sir Wilberforce.'

'Just so, just so; exactly; that may be all right enough; but that isn't the point so far as you are concerned, don't you see?'

'I don't see it by any means; I think it is the very point, Sir Wilberforce. I am afraid you are just as bad as he. How can you both be so unkind to this poor woman?'

'Why, you see, it's partly, I dare say, because we both think more of you than we do of her. She may have been your brother's wife and yet she mayn't be by any means the sort of person for you to have in your house. Young fellows when they go abroad to these places, you know, are apt to pick up with such extraordinary kind of women, and marry them, by Jove, before they know where they are, or what they are doing. I say, wasn't it lucky Clarkson didn't fall in love with any woman of that sort? If he did, he's just the man to marry her, I fancy.'

'But about this poor creature—you see we are only conjecturing all these dreadful things, Sir Wilberforce.'

'I dare say Clarkson knew a good deal more than he said; he couldn't well tell you, you know. Why doesn't this person go to the mother of her husband? there would be the place for her—she hasn't any claim on you.'

'She says so; she is very honest,' pleaded Gabrielle.

'Then, why does she come to you? why doesn't she go to the other lady?'

'Well, perhaps because she fancied I might be more sympathetic; or she heard of me first.'

‘Not a bit of it; excuse me, I don’t mean to say you are not sympathetic; but that isn’t her reason for settling down on you. It’s because there is no man here to deal with. Let her go to Major Leven; let him tackle her.’

Gabrielle could not help thinking that Major Leven would be about as easily talked over as anybody in the world.

‘I was going to write to Major Leven,’ she said; ‘I am anxious that he should come and see this poor woman.’

‘I’ll see her,’ Sir Wilberforce said, rising from his chair with an air of business-like promptitude. ‘I understand all that sort of thing; I’ve been a magistrate since before you were born, I dare say. Where is she? I’ll go to her.’

‘I will ask her to come, if you wish—’

‘No, no, my dear lady; you mustn’t be present, if you please. I should much rather talk to her myself. Tell your servant to show me to where she is. I’ll soon get to know all about the whole affair.’

Sir Wilberforce was evidently about to enter on a formal examination of Paulina, after the regular fashion of a county justice of the peace interrogating some new tramp or alien beggar who has ventured within his jurisdiction.

Gabrielle could not repress a smile.

‘But I don’t think she would like to be taken in that way, Sir Wilberforce. It is very kind of you to try to relieve me of some trouble; but would it be fair to my brother’s widow to treat her as if she were a person of suspicious character? She is here as a guest and not as a prisoner.’

Sir Wilberforce shook his head and sat down again.

‘Where do you keep your property,’ he asked—‘jewels and things—plate and things? plate at the bank?’

‘Everything of that kind that I have is in this house—not much, Sir Wilberforce,’ said Gabrielle, smiling and likewise blushing. His good-humoured, *brusque*, dictatorial way was not to be resisted, even although Gabrielle began to think that he was looking on her as a fool.

‘Never do, never do,’ Sir Wilberforce went on. ‘Ridiculous to have a place like this with only women. Coachman even—does he sleep on the premises?’

‘Mr. Bramble does; he is my housekeeper’s husband, Sir Wilberforce.’

‘That old man I saw the other day? Well, he would not be much good, I fancy.’

‘But, Sir Wilberforce, really it isn’t a case of standing siege. The house isn’t going to be attacked by the forty thieves—and

even if it were, I don't see how poor Paulina's being here would be likely to make things any the worse. She's not in league with the captain of the band. This house is not a grange.'

'Not a what?' Sir Wilberforce asked. He was not strong on Shakespeare.

'Well, I mean it isn't like a lonely country house. Besides, this poor Paulina—what on earth is there about her that makes you all go wild with suspicion? you are as bad as your brother.'

'You don't know much about this sort of people; and you are so awfully good-natured, you know. Well, do you think I mayn't see this person and talk with her a little?'

'I shouldn't like to have her shown off like a wild animal, Sir Wilberforce; or to have her treated as if she were a prisoner. Do please to understand that she is my sister-in-law, who has been guilty of no greater crime, so far as I know, than that of coming to ask me to help her in making herself known to her husband's mother.'

'Well, look here; the best thing you can do is to comply with her wish at once. Turn her over on Major Leven and his wife; they will understand how to deal with her much better than you can. Tell you what, Mrs. Vanthorpe: if you will allow me, I will call on Major Leven at once. I'll go over there now, and tell him all about the whole affair, and let him come and see this woman. It really is his business much more than yours, don't you know.'

Gabrielle could not dispute this fact. Sir Wilberforce's offer relieved her of a difficulty. She was really growing much distressed by the presence of Paulina. There was no talk of Paulina's returning to her lodgings, or sending for her child. When Gabrielle asked her about the boy she only evaded any answer, or laughed and assured her the boy was all right, and that he was to be brought over to her the very next day, and that he should stay there if Gabrielle liked him. But the boy did not make his appearance all the same, and Gabrielle could not but remember Fielding's urgent advice to her to press for some information about the child. In other ways too the companionship of Paulina became distressing. She talked with the maids a great deal, and asked them a variety of questions and made odd jokes with them. She rang her bell incessantly, and sometimes apparently for no other purpose than to have a chat with any of the servants; unless, indeed, when she wanted a little dry sherry or some soda-water with a dash of brandy. She scowled so fiercely at Miss Elvin more than once that that young lady declared herself in bodily fear of Paulina, and protested that Paulina would certainly murder some one before she left the house.

Gabrielle despised these terrors, and was determined that she would not be frightened out of sheltering Paulina as long as nothing worse than lack of polite manners could be ascribed to her; but in the mean time her presence seemed to vulgarise the very atmosphere. It was a great relief, therefore, to Gabrielle when Sir Wilberforce took on himself the task of calling on Major Leven, and directing his attention to Paulina. Gabrielle liked Sir Wilberforce so much, and thought him so kind and fatherly, that she did not mind in the least making use of his volunteered intervention. Nothing could be more remarkable than the manner in which she seemed to have struck up a friendship with him. They might have been uncle and niece, she thought, so free and friendly and trusting they were. She might have been his ward and he her guardian. Truly it is to be observed that Gabrielle had rather a rapid way of striking up friendships and of making confidants; and perhaps if Sir Wilberforce had known how quickly her likings were formed, he would have felt less gratified by her manifest liking for him. The liking was manifest, however, and he rode away very cheery and delighted to do her a service. He sang in imagination a sort of 'Tirra-Lirra,' like a middle-aged Lancelot of the more than middle-aged nineteenth century, as he went on his way to Major Leven. It must be owned that Gabrielle did actually cast a glance from one of her windows after him as he trotted off, looking firm and healthful and magisterial, with his sleek groom behind him—just the very model, to all outward seeming, of the man a young woman in perplexity would rely on for comfort and aid.

'Absurd to have her living all alone in that sort of way,' the stout Sir Lancelot said to himself as he rode on. 'Never do, never do.' Then his spirits began to sing 'Tirra-Lirra' again.

CHAPTER XXI.

EXERCISED.

WHY had Clarkson Fielding been so unwise as to argue and endeavour to convince Gabrielle? He should not have discussed the question of Paulina's treatment: he should have done something forthwith, and confronted Gabrielle with accomplished realities. For all that experience of men and cities on which Sir Wilberforce had complimented him, he had not anything like the knowledge of how to deal with women which came instinctively to his home-keeping brother's homely wits. Sir Wilberforce made up his mind at once that it would 'never do' to have Paulina saddled

on Gabrielle; that when Clarkson spoke against the woman there must be matter in it; and he decided that she must be got out of the house directly.

The end proved to be very easily brought about. Paulina's little plot was soon exploded. As she would probably have put it herself, 'the game was up' in a moment. A very brief investigation conducted by Major Leven, at the instigation and with the companionship of Sir Wilberforce, and with the help of Scotland Yard, turned far too much light on the immediate plans of Philip Vanthorpe's widow. To begin with, her one child had died before she came to Europe, and she had been in active negotiation, with the help of the woman in whose house she lodged on the Surrey side, to supply his place with a hired darling, in order to establish an irresistible claim on Mrs. Leven and the family generally. That was enough. Into her past life there was no need to enquire closely. Sir Wilberforce prudently suggested that the less anyone now knew about it the better. It was arranged, however, that she should be offered a small yearly sum, provided she took herself away from London and did not notoriously misconduct herself. But to this proposal the high-souled Paulina replied by snapping her fingers in the face of Major Leven who made it, and informing him that she was not to be kept quiet on such terms as that. She now boldly assumed the responsibility of her little plot: to adopt her own expression, she 'faced the music.' She avowed that, as her child was dead, she meant to have hired another one, 'to gammon the old lady,' and she laughed boisterously at the severe language which Major Leven began to use in reprobation of her conduct.

'Keep your twopenny-halfpenny allowance'—such were her irreverent words—'I'll have the pleasure of making your lives miserable for it. Look out for me, Major; tell the old lady she'll hear from me once or twice before all's done. Tell her she hasn't heard the last of Paulina Vanthorpe, not by a long way.'

'There are laws in this land, Madame,' Major Leven said with dignity.

'So there are, old boy, and mother-in-laws too,' the undaunted Paulina replied, 'and I mean to go for one of them one of these days.'

'I presume I need not say that you are to leave Mrs. Vanthorpe's house?' Major Leven said.

'Mrs. Vanthorpe hasn't a house to leave.'

'This house,' Major Leven said with emphasis.

'This house ain't Mrs. Vanthorpe's; Mrs. Vanthorpe's rich relations are turning her out of house and home; she may go and lie in the streets for all they care; I am Mrs. Vanthorpe.'

Major Leven winced, but he could not dispute the accuracy of her statement.

‘I mean Mrs. Albert Vanthorpe,’ he said.

‘You ought to say what you mean,’ was Paulina’s comment.

‘You will leave this house, of course?’

‘I’ll settle all that with my sister-in-law Gabrielle,’ Paulina replied grandly. ‘She’s the only Christian in the lot.’

Even Major Leven was displeased with Gabrielle. He could not but think that she had in some way brought this dreadful woman on them all, and made them ridiculous and exposed them to an almost unlimited possibility of shame and scandal. Gabrielle did not venture to ask him what Mrs. Leven said about the whole affair. In truth, Mrs. Leven had not said much. She resolutely declined from first to last to see Paulina, or to have anything whatever to do with her, beyond making the offer of the annual grant which Paulina had so contemptuously spurned. Her words about Gabrielle were few and harsh. ‘Will you ask that mad girl,’ she said to Major Leven, ‘to cease once for all from trying to bring further disgrace on the family of her dead husband?’ Major Leven did not bear this message to Gabrielle. He did not say that, whenever his wife spoke of her now, she only called her ‘that mad girl.’ But he did remonstrate with Gabrielle firmly and somewhat sadly on her impulsiveness; and she felt his words keenly. Major Leven saw dreadful things looming in the future. He wished very much Paulina had taken the money: he wished they had offered her more at first. He felt sure she would be as good as her word, and would try to inflict all manner of annoyance upon them. He even feared she would not leave Gabrielle’s house. He spoke of his fear to Gabrielle.

‘Hadn’t I better do something, Gabrielle? She can be got out of the house, you know, if she won’t go quietly. But I don’t see how you are to manage with her. You are far too soft. She will easily talk you over. Hadn’t I better take some steps?’

‘Thank you, no,’ Gabrielle said quietly. ‘If I have brought this on myself, I can get out of it myself. I don’t believe the poor creature is so bad as you all appear to think. I am not in the least afraid of her. I have more faith in human nature than even you, Major Leven, although you used to teach me once that above all things one must not lose faith in the better part of human nature.’

‘Yes, my dear, yes,’ Major Leven said, a little softened; ‘but that was in dealing with untutored aboriginal races, you know, and not in the case of creatures spoiled by the neglect of society—having all the viciousness of our effete civilisation grafted on to

the wild passions of the savage.' Major Leven was gliding insensibly into the eloquence of St. James's Hall.

'Well, you must leave me to deal with my aboriginals in my own way, Major Leven. You need not be alarmed for me. I shall go into the lioness's cage, without any fear, and come out all right. I believe I could have dealt with this poor woman better than any of you—at all events for what remains I mean to try.'

There was no coping with the mad girl in one of these humours. Major Leven left her, not without pity and regret. 'At all events old Bramble is in the house,' he said to himself, 'a hale old fellow, and there are several women; I don't see how any harm can come to the girl.' He remained more than an hour near the house, however, and when he was going away he took a policeman into his confidence and bound him to keep a special look-out over Gabrielle's little demesne.

Meanwhile Gabrielle had entered the cage of the lioness. She went to Paulina's room at once. She did not knock at the door, fearing that Paulina might lock herself in and refuse to see her, but boldly opened the door and went in. At first she was a little startled. Paulina lay upon the hearth, her face downward, writhing like one in passion or in pain, and beating the floor with her hands. Gabrielle never wanted more than a second of thought to regain her courage. She stooped down and touched the woman's shoulder. Paulina leaped to her feet with a spring which might indeed have almost reminded one of the leap of the lioness. She confronted Gabrielle with glaring eyes and passion-distorted features. Her half-bare arms appeared to have the muscles and strength of an amazon. At the sight of Gabrielle, however, her expression became less fierce, and she muttered something about having been sleeping, and tried to pull herself into more seemly condition.

'Paulina,' Gabrielle said in her quiet, sweet tone, 'I am sorry for all this, very sorry. You ought not to have deceived me about the child. I was your friend.'

'There, there!' Paulina said vehemently; 'don't say any more about it. I know I did wrong. I don't care a——I mean, I don't care a button about *them*; but I do care about you. If I had known you longer, I'd have let you into the secret; I'd never have tried to deceive you.'

It was not clear whether Paulina meant that, if she had known Gabrielle better, she would have shown her appreciation of Gabrielle's sense of honour by taking her into the plot about the child. It is possible this may have been her meaning. Poor Paulina's moral sense was a little perverted. The idea, however, did not occur to Gabrielle.

'It was a very, very wicked thing, Paulina, she began to say, 'to try to deceive Mrs. Leven or any one about the child. You must feel, every woman must feel, how wrong and wicked that was.'

'You may say anything you like to me, Gabrielle,' the impenitent Paulina said, 'I don't mind anything from you. But if you were like me, you know, left a widow, and tired of knocking about the world, and wanting to be taken in somewhere and allowed to live a decent life, you'd do many shabby things to get what you wanted. At least, you wouldn't, perhaps; but I never was good like that—and most women would do like me, you bet.'

Gabrielle saw the futility of sermonising on the subject just now. She had not, perhaps, any great faith in set preaching to sinners just at the moment when their punishment was about to fall upon them. Preaching and penalties did not seem to her to make a becoming companionship.

'When am I to go?' Paulina suddenly asked, with the fierce light coming into her eyes again.

'You need not go until you are ready, until you like,' Gabrielle answered. 'And you must let me know what you are doing, Paulina: I must help you in some way; you will come and see me sometimes.'

'Then you ain't going to turn me right out of doors? I haven't got to leave this very moment?'

'Not this moment, nor to-night; only when you are ready to go, and like to go.'

'But that old Major talked of my being sent out of this at once.'

'Major Leven is a kind good man, Paulina; you must remember that you were deceiving him and his wife very cruelly, and you couldn't expect him to think well of you. But Major Leven is not the owner of this house.'

'No, thank the Lord!'

'See, Paulina, you must want money, perhaps. I'll leave that purse on your table; take just what you want; take it all if you want it, it is not a great deal——'

'I have gold chains and things, I can get money for them—I'm not proud.'

'But they were given you by your husband, I suppose: you must not part with them, Paulina; no, take what you want from me for the present, until you see what you can turn yourself to; there must be many ways for a woman of energy and spirit to make a living in London. We will try to do something; but I think you

would be better out of London perhaps. Would you like to return to America ?'

Paulina made no reply, but, to Gabrielle's utter astonishment, seized her in her strong white arms, lifted her fairly off her feet, caught her up to her breast as one catches a child, kissed her again and again, and then set her down. Gabrielle stood ruffled and panting, and feeling terribly undignified.

'You are a little darling, and a blessed angel, and I don't know what all,' Paulina exclaimed. 'I'll never harm you or annoy you, Gabrielle, you ~~may~~ take your oath of that. But I'll have it out of them ; I'll have it out of *him*.'

Gabrielle did not think at the moment of who the '*him*' might be. She assumed that Paulina was threatening the Levens, and she began to remonstrate.

'I wouldn't touch their money—did you hear ? I wasn't to be bought off at such a price as that. Revenge is sweeter than that much, anyhow. I'll have it out of *him* too ; I owe him a score, and it has to be worked off. I would not touch their money, Gabrielle, but *yours* is a different thing ; I have no revenge in for you. And look here, Gabrielle, let me give you a bit of advice before we part: do you know a cad and a sneak called Robert Charlton ?'

'I know a Robert Charlton—'

'Very well, that's the chap. Don't you try to do any good for him, he ain't worthy of it. It was he first gave me your name and your address, and helped me to all this ; he's a cad. I'll *make* use of him, perhaps—but don't you have anything to say to him ; he ain't for the likes of you. All right, now, Gabrielle ; leave the purse here, and I'll not trouble you long. You trust me ?'

She had by this time worked herself into something like composure, and had brought her dress and her hair into a semblance of array. As she stood in the deepening dusk, tall and stately, with her strong and shapely arms seen and her eyes still flaming, and with the ravages of time, and paint, and passion, and tears, only faintly visible in the dim light, she seemed like some savage queen challenging the confidence of a doubting stranger. Gabrielle could not help looking at her with a certain artistic admiration.

'I trust you in this ; of course I do,' Gabrielle said. 'I would have trusted you in everything, Paulina. It is not my fault if I am obliged to say that you were not as true to me as I would have been to you.'

Paulina only answered by a half-impatient gesture, as of one who would ask, 'What is the good of going over all that now ?' Gabrielle felt that there was indeed no good in going over it. Paulina was not in the slightest degree penitent for what she had

done, except alone for not having 'played the square game,' as she would have called it, with so good a creature as Mrs. Albert Vanthorpe.

Gabrielle left her. A few moments after it happened that Miss Elvin was passing along one of the corridors and she met Paulina. Perhaps the singer expressed some pity or scorn in her eyes, or drew her skirts a little too ostentatiously around her to let the out-cast of respectability go by. Anyhow, Paulina suddenly stopped and seized Miss Elvin by her two thin sallow wrists, and shook her until Paulina's own bangles rattled like cymbals in the affrighted captive's ears.

'Do you know that I could lift you up in one hand, and chuck you over these balusters?' Paulina asked, and she fixed her fierce eyes on Miss Elvin's feeble struggles and shivers. 'Do you know that I could strangle you, or snap you in two across my knee? There, get away with you, and put on a civil face when next you meet me.'

Poor Miss Elvin vanished in mere hysterics.

That night Gabrielle sat in her room alone. She had sent her maid to bed, but she had as yet no notion of going to bed herself. Her window was open to the skies, like that of Irene with her destinies of whom Edgar Poe sings. The soft night air came with benign coolness and freshness across the trees of the park. The murmur of London was subdued to a low rushing sound, as that of some far distant waterfall. There was no moon, but the stars were very bright, and appeared to be in movement of unwonted energy through the still heaven. Gabrielle seemed as if by looking up to the sky, and abstracting herself from the sight of the trees and the walls, she could actually feel the motion of the earth through space. She had some need to abstract herself from realities and to indulge in fancies; for there had of late been many disagreeable influences affecting her life, and the conditions of her existence had been disturbed by more than one unwelcome and uncongenial intrusion. She was glad in one sense that Paulina was to go; and yet she felt some pity still for the woman, and she was sorry that it was from her house Paulina had to be, as it were, thrust forth. She was beginning to have a disheartening and tormenting doubt as to the virtue of acting always on generous impulses. She was having it forced upon her that the efforts she loved to make for people's good were for the most part ending in miserable failure. She had not brought happiness, it would seem, but misery to the Charltons. She had done no good for poor Paulina; she had embittered Mrs. Leven against herself more than ever. She seemed to have offended and

estranged Clarkson Fielding: she was beginning to have grave doubts concerning the gratitude and the truthfulness of Gertrude Elvin. She feared that she had been too friendly with Walter Taxal; she began to find out that he was not a man to be treated as if he were of like age with Sir Wilberforce Fielding. In short, her mind was a good deal perturbed with doubts of herself, and of the success of the good purposes to which a little while ago she fondly believed she was devoting her existence, and thereby rendering it justifiable.

Suddenly she heard a rapid succession of little knocks at her door, and before she could rise the handle was turned from outside, and Miss Elvin came in with all the manner of one who has been considerably scared.

'Oh, I am so glad you are not in bed,' the child of song exclaimed, her eyes almost starting from her head; 'I thought I would come and see you, if you were up. I am so frightened.'

She did look scared certainly, but she had not forgotten to make herself as picturesque as possible even in her alarm. She was only half-dressed; but was in a very artistic condition of undress, with her hair all floating on her back and shoulders—just such *déshabillé* as the most prudent heroine of romance might not object to be found in if the flames were breaking out and the lover were expected every moment to burst into the imperilled damsel's chamber and bear her away to safety.

'What is the matter, Gertrude?' Gabrielle took the girl's hand and led her gently into the room. Gabrielle was not easily put in personal fear, and she assumed that this would be only a question of robbers, or of a mouse, or perhaps even a blackbeetle. She knew that Miss Elvin was of the highly wrought temperament that lives in exaggeration.

'That woman, that dreadful woman! I am so much afraid of her. I am sure she means to kill me!'

'Do you mean poor Paulina?' Gabrielle asked, not altogether without a tone of contempt in her voice.

'I do, I do; she hates me; there is something deadly about her; she will try to kill me, I know. Oh, how I wish I had gone to Lady Honeybell's yesterday!'

'Sit down, Gertrude, and tell me what you are afraid of.'

'Mayn't I lock the door first?'

'No, that would be rather ridiculous, wouldn't it? as if we were two frightened children.'

'But I am so frightened—oh!' The girl looked over her shoulder towards the doorway as if she expected some grisly apparition to cross the threshold.

Gabrielle went to the door, opened it, and looked out along the corridor. There was no one there. All seemed quiet. She came back and sat down by the singer.

'Come, Gertrude, tell me all about it.'

'That woman hates me,' Miss Elvin began; 'that you know—you must have seen it, and she is a dreadful woman.'

'Well, but to-night?'

'I was in my room, not very long ago, and I was undressing, and I had made the lamp very low; I don't like light; and it was very low, like twilight. And suddenly I heard the door open softly, softly, behind me, and that woman crept into the room.'

'Paulina—came into your room?'

'She did; I saw her. She came in and looked round, and her face was all black with rage and hate, and her eyes were like the eyes of a tiger, or a devil, or something, and she made towards the bed, and I know if I had been asleep she would have killed me! Oh yes, Mrs. Vanthorpe, you may wonder, but I know she would. And then she saw me—Oh!'

'She saw you? Did she say anything?'

'Not a word; but she glared at me with the expression of a demon, and I didn't dare to stir; I thought she was going to kill me. I couldn't move, dear Mrs. Vanthorpe; no, not to save my life. I seemed to be paralysed, as one is in a nightmare, you know. I seemed to be in some horrible dream.'

'I think you must have been in a dream, Gertrude; the light was low, and it was late, and you fell asleep and dreamed this.'

'Oh, no, Mrs. Vanthorpe. Oh, how could that be? I had my hair down, I was brushing my hair, the brush never fell from my hand. Oh, I hadn't a thought of sleep. If I had been asleep she would have killed me.'

'But why should she want to kill you? Did she say anything? What did she do when you looked up? Did she see you?'

'Oh yes, her eyes met mine. She glared into my eyes.'

'And said nothing all this time?'

'Not a word. It wasn't a long time, though it seemed to me as if ages must have rolled by in that moment—ages.'

'Yes, yes, of course; we know all that,' Gabrielle said a little impatiently; 'but did nothing come of this? Did she stand looking at you, and you sit looking at her, and neither speak one word to the other?'

'I didn't dare to speak to her, I didn't dare to say a word, I hadn't the power. When she saw that I was up and dressed, and that she couldn't kill me in my sleep, she gave a laugh—Oh, dear

Mrs. Vanthorpe, such a laugh! If you ever heard a devil laugh—'

'But I never did, Gertrude; so the comparison isn't of any use to me. Anyhow, she laughed?'

'She did—such a laugh! I know it was like a devil's laugh. A low fiendish chuckle—oh, I shall never have it out of my ears or out of my mind.'

'Oh, yes,' said Gabrielle quietly, 'I have no doubt you will; but I dare say it was a disagreeable laugh. I should not like a woman coming into my bedroom late at night to perform a laugh there. What happened then?'

'Then—oh, then she went out of the room and closed the door behind her.'

'Then, is that all?'

'All! dear Mrs. Vanthorpe, is not that enough? I know you are ever so brave, and I am not; but still, if that woman had suddenly come into your room late at night and glared on you in that way, you would have been frightened too.'

'Well, I dare say I should have thought it very odd conduct. But then she is an odd person. She has not been long in the house, and she may have mistaken your room for hers.'

Miss Elvin shook her head.

'Her room is at the other side of the house.'

'Yes, but the house isn't very large, and she might easily have made a mistake. Perhaps she wanted to ask you for something.'

'But why did she come creeping in that way towards the bed? Why didn't she speak when she saw me?'

'Perhaps she saw by your manner that you were alarmed and she thought she had better go away as fast as possible. Just tell me, Gertrude—I think she must have merely mistaken the room—was she dressed?'

'Oh yes, she was dressed for the street, dressed for walking; she had her hat on.'

'Come now, Gertrude, I really think you must have fallen asleep and dreamed this. Why should the poor woman be dressed for walking out at midnight?'

'I don't know what she was dressed for, or why she was there; but I know she was dressed. I saw her beastly eyes glaring at me under her beastly hat.'

Gabrielle thought the whole thing very unpleasant. No one could well say what odd prank Paulina might have taken it into her head to play off for the purpose of annoying Miss Elvin, or any'

d Gabrielle had certainly more than once seen of dislike and disgust at Miss Elvin. She was

perhaps the sort of malign creature who would take a pleasure in terrifying anyone who showed a capacity for being frightened.

‘I think I had better go and speak to her, Gertrude.’

‘Go near that dreadful woman, dear Mrs. Vanthorpe?—oh, no, pray don’t do that.’

‘I am not afraid,’ said Gabrielle quietly.

‘Won’t you call any of the servants?’

‘No, I don’t want to make any alarm or to have things talked about.’

‘Then I must go with you; I dare not stay by myself while you are away.’

‘I should rather go alone, Gertrude; I can deal with her much better by myself. There can be no danger to you while you stay here; I shall intercept the danger, you know, whatever it is.’

Gabrielle took a lamp and went to Paulina’s room, not perhaps without a little heart-beating at the prospect of a scene rather than of any danger. But there was no scene. Paulina was not in her room, nor in any room. One of the sitting-rooms had windows that were almost level to the little lawn; and Paulina had evidently contrived to open one of these, had gone out, and closed it behind her. The little outer gate presented no obstacle to the elastic limbs of the resolute Paulina. She was gone. Why she had looked into Miss Elvin’s room—whether by mere mistake, or with some sudden purpose to do the girl mischief, or out of a freak to frighten her, or whether she took it for Gabrielle’s room and meant to have a last look at her patroness, could not now be known. The certain thing was that she had gone and had left no word of message behind her. A sort of message she had left, however. On the table in the room Paulina had occupied, Gabrielle found conspicuously set out the money she had put in the purse which she offered to the outcast. Gabrielle had put a certain sum into it; and there it was now untouched, every sovereign. But the purse was taken—an old thing that had cost a few shillings when it was new. Paulina had left the place no richer than she entered it, except for the value of an empty purse that had belonged to Gabrielle. Gabrielle understood what was meant by the money left behind and the purse taken.

CHAPTER XXII.

GABRIELLE FLIES TO SANCTUARY.

WILD indeed were the rumours that went about among those who knew Gabrielle when the story of Paulina’s visit and of her sudden mysterious disappearance became known. The tale swelled

in growing until, with some people, it became magnified into a terrible narrative about an attempt on the life of Gabrielle, or of Miss Elvin, or of both together, by a furious assailant who was represented by some as an escaped madwoman, and by others as a professional murderess; a sort of demoniac 'Roaring Girl' without any quality of goodness. The news reached the Charltons soon, but reached them free of all the more extravagant additions. They learned at least that Gabrielle was alive and well, and that nobody had even offered to do her harm. But Robert turned pale, and could not hide, even from the unsuspecting eyes of his wife, the alarm which he felt when he was told that the terrible Paulina had disappeared and was at large. He had but a very vague idea of how her schemes had come to failure, but he had a ghastly suspicion that she would blame him somehow, and that he had not heard the last of her. The late Emperor Napoleon was haunted, people used to say, by a hideous conviction that all the Orsini bombs were not fired away in the attempt of the rue Lepelletier, but that some were saving up in unknown and desperate hands for a new conspiracy. Something of the same sort of alarm was felt by humble Robert Charlton when he found that Paulina had missed her aim and was at large. He had been forced to go and see her in the Surrey house more than once, unknown to his wife, while the plot was maturing; he did not know whether she might not seek to make him now responsible for its failure. Janet saw that he was distressed by something, but did not dare to ask him for an explanation. She resolved that she would take the first opportunity of appealing to Gabrielle for advice and comfort.

The news of Paulina's escape reached Walter Taxal among all the rest. It was told to him at Major Leven's. It was set off by many bitter comments from Mrs. Leven on the general misdoings of the mad girl. Walter Taxal listened with uncomfortable sensations, then undertook a defence of Gabrielle, who seemed to him to have simply acted for the best in the whole affair; and then he stammered in the defence and became embarrassed and broke down, and let Mrs. Leven have it all her own way as long as he remained. But he did not remain long. The thought of Gabrielle living alone, and subject to all manner of annoyance and misconstruction because of her very generosity, filled him with courage to make an attempt for which he had long been trying to nerve himself.

'I think you spoke too strongly about Gabrielle, Constance,' Major Leven said when Taxal was gone. 'She is very foolish, but she means everything for the best; and do you know I think Taxal likes her? I have thought so this some time.'

'Yes; I am sure he likes her,' Mrs. Leven said composedly; 'and that is the very reason why I feel it my duty to warn him against her mad ways. She is very likely thinking of marrying the young man. I have a great regard for Walter Taxal, and he shall not be drawn into such a thing if I can help it. At least he shall have his eyes open.'

'I don't believe Gabrielle would marry him or any one else,' Major Leven said.

'I could believe anything of her now. I am glad I have not a third son. I owe the death of one son to her; and but for her I might never have come to know of the degradation and the miserable end of the other.'

Major Leven winced and turned in his chair. It was fearful for one accustomed to public discussion to hear such utterly unreasonable expressions of opinion, and not to point out their lack of reason. But he knew from experience that argument in that case would only confirm the error it fondly tried to assail.

Gabrielle was not particularly delighted just then to receive a visit from Walter Taxal. She liked the young man very much; she had, indeed, something almost amounting to affection for him. He was not very clever, or brilliant, or original; and she liked men to be in some way clever, or brilliant, or original. But he was thoroughly manly, brave, and generous; she liked him, and liked him all the better because she knew that he liked her. She was almost as free with him as if he were a brother, or a cousin at least. She would send to him or write to him at any time if she wanted anything done. She felt inclined sometimes to adopt Lady Honeybell's words, and say that Walter Taxal was her right-hand man. It had not occurred to her, until lately, that a young man might very satisfactorily occupy that place for Lady Honeybell, who could not safely be allowed to hold the same position with regard to Gabrielle Vanthorpe. Gabrielle had very little personal self-conceit. It would have been much better for herself and for others if she had had a great deal more. Perhaps her temperament was too impetuous and eager to leave her much time for mere thinking about herself. The wrongs of somebody or other were always appealing to her for redress, and they occupied her to the exclusion of her own personal considerations. Besides, it never occurred to her to suppose that anyone could associate the name of Albert Vanthorpe's widow with any thought of marriage. She liked Walter Taxal; why should he not like her? She had not the faintest idea of falling in love with him; why should he fall in love with her?

Of late, however, as we have said already, Gabrielle did begin

to have some misgivings that she had been too friendly with Walter Taxal. Gabrielle certainly was not a dull young woman; and she could not help seeing that Taxal had been trying to devote himself to her lately in a manner that suggested a claim for more than mere friendship. This troubled her, among other things. It did more than vaguely trouble her. It set her doubting much as to the wisdom of trusting to the light of her unguided impulses. It set her thinking—‘Am I only doing harm, and not good, to those whom I like and would gladly serve?’

She received Walter Taxal this day, therefore, with decided mistrust and an uncomfortable apprehension that a trying scene was before her. At first the talk was only about Paulina and her disappearance. Gabrielle spoke up for unfortunate Paulina as well as she could.

‘Where did you hear of all this, Mr. Taxal?’ she asked, delighted that the conversation was gliding so smoothly along on such harmless ground.

‘I heard it at Leven’s; Mrs. Leven told me all about it.’ He was growing embarrassed. Gabrielle forgot him for the moment on hearing Mrs. Leven’s name.

‘She blames me very much, I suppose?’ Gabrielle said. ‘It is strange; I was only trying to do her a kindness; and now it all ends in this way. I try to do things for the best, I think I do really, and they turn out for the worst! I am afraid I am an unlucky woman; everybody will soon have to avoid me.’

This was an unlucky remark. It drew fire at once. It gave an opening for the very appeal Gabrielle did not wish to hear, and had been hoping even still to escape. Unluckily, too, Gabrielle accompanied it with an appealing look of her melancholy eyes, meant less for Walter Taxal than for the destinies and the powers generally that rule over humanity.

‘You’ll not get me to avoid you, Mrs. Vanthorpe,’ the excited young man blurted out, ‘or to think anything of you but that you are ever so much too good for this sort of world altogether. Look here, Gabrielle—I’ve been trying to come to this a long time; I’ve had the words on my lips again and again, and I always broke down somehow and could not get them out; but now I will speak. Give me a right to speak for you; let me stand up for you—’

‘Mr. Taxal—don’t, please, talk in that way—no one is condemning me—everyone is too kind to me—almost everyone—I don’t want any defenders—I have done no wrong.’ She stopped for breath; she was stifled by her feelings.

‘I don’t mean that; I know you don’t care what people say.

But you know what I mean ; you know I love you ; I want you to be my wife. Gabrielle, Gabrielle !'

It was all out now. The worst had come. He attempted to take her hand, but she drew back, and stood so resolutely aloof that he stopped disheartened. He could not fancy that in her manner there was any of the winning coyness that only waits to be pressed. He saw that he had failed and that there was no hope.

She too began to see her way now.

'Will you come this way, Mr. Taxal? One moment, please ; I do not ask you to go far or to stay long.'

Her eyes were sparkling now, her lips were trembling, there was an animation about her that he had never seen before. It almost frightened the poor young man. He remembered having heard elderly and cynical men declare as an axiom in natural philosophy that every woman has a temper, if you only wait to find it out. Could it be that this was the revelation of Gabrielle Vanthorpe's temper? Meanwhile Mr. Taxal had not the least idea as to whither she was leading him, or to what awful rite or presence he was about to be introduced.

Gabrielle crossed a corridor or two and suddenly opened a door and invited Taxal to enter with her. He obeyed. The room was darkened by the close branches of trees outside the windows, and was further gloomed by the sombre colour of the walls, the curtains, the furniture, everything. It seemed at first to his puzzled fancy like a small museum or cabinet of curiosities. There were certainly various small objects scattered, or rather very carefully arranged, on tables and stands and in window-seats and on brackets.

A black curtain hung against one of the walls. Gabrielle drew it hastily aside and showed a white tablet.

'Look at that, Mr. Taxal,' she said ; 'read that, if you please. Will you read it aloud, please?'

The astonished Taxal was rather short-sighted. He had to spoil a good deal of dramatic effect by searching for, adjusting, dropping, and adjusting again his eyeglass. Gabrielle waited meantime with what might be called monumental composure. Then he read the words, 'This room is devoted to the memory of Albert Vanthorpe, who died in Genoa——' and then followed the date of his death and the name of the English cemetery in which he lay buried.

Now Walter Taxal began to understand why he had been brought into this room. Gabrielle silently pointed to the photograph of Albert's grave.

'That is where my husband is buried,' she said. 'See, Mr. Taxal, there are memorials of him all round this room. I don't receive people here, or I might perhaps have been here when you asked me to marry you. That would have been appropriate, would it not? This would be the proper place for me to receive such a proposal.'

She smiled a wild smile. Poor Taxal felt crushed. In that mournful room, in presence of that pale face and those glittering eyes, he seemed to himself like some criminal called up for his sentence.

'You must forgive me, Mrs. Vanthorpe,' he stammered out; 'I didn't mean to give you any pain; I didn't think of it in that way; I couldn't help loving you—'

'Oh, hush, hush,' she said with a scared expression in her face, 'don't talk like that. That is why I brought you here, that you might not use words like that. See here, Mr. Taxal, there is the date of my husband's death. Almost the other day, you see; one may say only the other day. He was very fond of me; oh, so kind and good to me; and I never could repay his kindness; I never had a chance, no—not in life. All that I have I owe to him. All the poor means I have of doing good to any human creature, and of making life worth having, I owe to him. Do you think I am going to put another in his place—already?' and her wild smile this time had something in it scornful. 'Oh, no; you don't think so any more. You know now; and you will forget all this, and I shall try to forget it, and we shall be friends once again as we were—as we always were before this.'

She seemed more reasonable now. He felt that he had the courage to say:—

'But you are so young, and you can't live always this lonely sort of life—no, don't be angry, I am not speaking now for myself any more.'

'Thank you,' she answered quite fervently; 'I knew you would not, Mr. Taxal, when I had told you.'

'No, Mrs. Vanthorpe,' the poor youth said in a resigned tone; 'I was not speaking for myself: what would be the use? But I was thinking of you—of you always living this lonely, unnatural sort of life; and you who might be so happy—'

'Oh no, not lonely, nor unnatural, nor unhappy. I am never alone, unless when I want to be. I have friends—the kindest friends a woman could have, I think; and I shall have another dear friend in time; you know whom I mean, Mr. Taxal, you know her.' She was thinking, he knew very well, of Mrs. Leven. 'How could I be unhappy? have I not you for a friend?'

'I have loved you,' he said, 'this long time——'

'Oh——' she made an effort to stop him.

'No, Mrs. Vanthorpe,' he said very quietly. 'You must let me say it now, just this once, and then I shall be done with it, don't you know; with talking of it, I mean; and that will be better for both of us. I just want to explain.'

She stood near the chimney-piece, with her eyes fixed on the photograph of Albert Vanthorpe's grave, and she allowed him to go on without interrupting.

'This long time,' he said; 'this is no new thing with me. I didn't know about poor Albert, or I might have spoken even before him, and got my dismissal long ago.' He made a feeble attempt to take it lightly. 'I want you to believe that this is no new thing and no trifling thing, but something real and deep. I want you to believe that, I should be sorry otherwise.'

'I do believe it, I believe anything you tell me, and I am so grateful to you for taking it in this way. I shall always count you among my dearest friends. One good thing of all this is that after what has passed between us we may be very, very frank to each other—and I may say how very dear you are to me, and always will be; and you will understand?'

Yes, he quite understood now. He knew that he had a faithful friend; and that in her he could never have anything more. He could bear this, but it was too soon for him to do more than endure it.

'This is a dreary room,' she said, 'for any one but me; and I would not have brought you here, only—do you know that you are the only man who has ever been in this room since it was given up to its present purpose?'

She was not thinking of any such meaning, but her words told Taxal that he was the first who had ever approached her on the subject of marriage since Albert's death. 'There will be others,' he thought. 'Other poor fellows will be called in for sentence here, as I have been.' There was a sort of grim consolation in the thought.

'And now,' she said, 'I must not keep you in this melancholy place any longer. Good-bye, Walter: I'll call you by your name this once, to show that we are friends.'

'Good-bye, Gabrielle.'

Her name spoken in that tone came from him as the final and formal renunciation of his hopes. She came with him out of the melancholy room, and then he went away; and she went back to her sombre sanctuary. Walter Taxal certainly could not have known why she humbled herself in such penitence and grief that

day before the tablet put up to poor Albert's memory. She torturing herself with self-accusation and shame. If Ta could have seen her self-abasement and heard her occasional ejaculations he might possibly, were he a vain young fellow, have come to the conclusion that her heart was fighting for all the time against her conscience, and that she was now cursing herself of a tendency to yield to his appeal. But Walter was not vain; and he would not have caught from her words or her looks any thought to favour his lost hope. Yet she did speak as if there was some feeling arising within her which her sensitive conscience condemned as an infidelity to the memory of Albert Vanthorpe. Why was she self-reproachful? Not, surely, because a brave young man had loved her, and she had not been able to love him. There could be no substance for self-reproach in that.

(To be continued.)

At Night in a Hospital.

BY E. LYNN LINTON.

THE London Hospital in Whitechapel Road, instituted A.D. 1740, while George II. was king, is an object familiar enough to all who pass that way; familiar too in a mournful if helpful sense to sundry poor souls who live in its neighbourhood and who are struck down by accident or disease. 'Situated on a high road of great traffic, in the midst of a district containing about one million persons, with extensive manufactories on all sides, and in close proximity to the various docks of the metropolis and to great railway centres; the London Hospital administers medical and surgical relief to a population pre-eminently exposed, by its density, to disease, and, by the nature of its employments, to sudden and painful accidents;' and is thus, *par excellence*, the hospital for surgical cases and the treatment of such diseases as come from poverty and insanitary conditions. 'It is virtually a free hospital'—these quotations are made from the Report for 1874—'nearly three-fourths of the patients being received without the recommendation of subscribers, and admitted into the wards according to the severity of their cases as adjudged by the medical and surgical officers; while no accident, or similarly urgent case, from whatever quarter it may come, is ever turned away.'

In the past year (1878), of in-patients, 4,794 were admitted free, while 1,654 were recommended by Governors—total, 6,448; of out-patients 29,215 were treated free, while 20,576 were recommended by subscribers—total, 49,791:—gross total of those treated by the hospital, 56,239. It has 790 beds; a fixed income of less than 14,000*l.* a year, and an expenditure of more than thrice that amount. It is the largest hospital in the country, and essentially the hospital for the eastern half of London and the suburbs adjoining, where the population is, as we all know, the poorest in the metropolis and the most needing aid in times of distress.

Like almost all valuable things this hospital has grown to its present size and importance from comparatively humble beginning; its first start as 'the London Infirmary' being made (1740) 'in four houses (with 136 beds) hired on lease in Prescott Street, Goodman's Fields. These houses being a constant source of outlay for repairs, the Governors opened a subscription in order to "purchase a piece of ground, and build a house more proper for enlarg-

ing and perpetuating their benevolent designs." The foundation stone was laid October 15, 1752, by Admiral Sir Peter Warren, Bart., K.B., and the building was finished by December 1759. The new hospital was fitted up with 130 beds; eleven wards remaining unutilised, however, from want of funds.' Since then, by slow degrees, and with fluctuations of now pinch and now plenty—now a wing added here to meet the pressing demands of the time, and now wards shut up there for want of means to keep them open—the plan has grown into what it is; till, by the last new addition of the 'Grocers' Company's wing,' for which that worshipful body gave a donation of 25,000*l.*, the number of beds was raised to its present total of 790.

This, then, is a brief summary of the London Hospital in Whitechapel; the bones of the matter as it were to which living circumstances give flesh and human interest.

The present condition of the London Hospital is one of very great technical perfection. Those five-and-a-quarter acres of flooring, which room and ward, passage and staircase measure when added together, are as clean as if they had been laid down yesterday fresh from the plane; there are separate lifts for the food and the coals and the poor dead bodies when the last breath is drawn and the last act played out; speaking tubes and telegraph-bells carry orders and summon attendance without the loss of one moment of precious time; the fire brigade is in perfect organisation, and there is no *cul-de-sac* anywhere, so that in case such a calamity as a fire should occur, the patients could escape right and left all through the building. Add to this the important fact that there is no well staircase in the more modern additions; and thus the infected wards can at any time be shut off by cross-doors, which, with open windows, effectually isolate and ventilate. In this manner the erysipelas wards are shut off from the rest of the hospital; the nurses have their own staircase; the service has its own organisation; and the patients are absolutely isolated from the rest of the hospital.

The cooking is done by steam and gas; and since this method was adopted about 620*l.* a year in money is saved by the less waste of raw meat. And to save waste at the spit is no small matter when we remember that daily rations have to be cooked for nearly one thousand persons—the force of the London Hospital when all the beds are full. (The paid staff numbers two hundred and fifty persons from the Governor down to the charwomen. The honorary visiting staff is twenty-six.) The laundry too is managed by steam, which is also a saving of money and labour, and when 'soap, & : 294*l.* 0*s.* 1*d.* we can imagine that any

economy, which is economy of method not stint of service, is of infinite importance in the wise management of matters.

Going on with the accounts, these items are not uninteresting. Of artificial ice from 17. to 18 cwt. is used weekly; the milk bill is over 2,100*l.* yearly; eggs cost more than 820*l.*, and vegetables stand at only a few pounds less; butter is 653*l.* 19*s.* 4*d.* for the year; bread stands at 1,386*l.* 14*s.* 3*d.*; meat at 5,477*l.* 18*s.* 7*d.*; there is hot and cold water from garret to basement, and the water bill is 190*l.* 7*s.* 8*d.*; while firing and light come to 2,658*l.* 7*s.* 2*d.*

Most of us have been through the wards of a hospital by day, but few have been admitted as visitors in the night. This valuable privilege and rare experience were granted to one other and myself, both taken in the skirts of a dear and gracious lady, the wife of one of our leading physicians, and herself well known for her zeal in hospital work and sanitary matters generally. The very drive in the late evening from one of the fashionable West-End centres through the slackening traffic of the city, and on to that toiling, noisy, crowded Whitechapel with its look of sitting up all night, and where even the children never seem to go to bed, doing its business as diligently at midnight as at noonday, and as careless of rest as of repose—this drive itself is an experience worth having. At first we meet only the carriages of the rich and great whirling off their wealthy occupants to stately dinner-parties which *chefs* and *cordons bleus* make works of art as well as of science, and where the whole round of beauty and luxury is complete. Then the private carriages cease, and we come into the region of street cabs and omnibuses filled with the subordinates of the business world going home to their little villas in the suburbs; and, finally, these add to themselves tramcars, carts and barrows, blocking up streets where all the shops are open and the gin-palaces are in full force, and where apparently the whole population is astir and active life at its briskest. Through them we steer our way with more or less difficulty, till we come to the immense building, stretching out its two hospitable arms, which we have set out to see. There we are received by the Governor who has undertaken to be our guide and local encyclopædia, and our work of visiting begins.

All the offices below are in a blaze of light, ready for use at an instant's notice. The dispensary and receiving-room are in full working order, and the one object of existence is how to mitigate the pain and save the life of the first poor creature who may be brought in, crushed, maimed, poisoned, paralysed, or in any way whatsoever reduced from the ranks of capable and healthy humanity to those of suffering and disease. The place is thus kept open and active up to three o'clock in the morning; and even when

the principal officials have gone to bed, the hospital is still available, and help still at hand. The house surgeon and physician of the week live just over the entrance; and should any case of severity, demanding instant treatment, be admitted, they can be roused in a moment and at their blessed craft of healing, in almost as little time as it takes to tell. By the way, one of the present house surgeons was taken prisoner during the Turkish War, and carried off as one of the valuable captures made by the chance of the hour.

While we are looking round the room we hear the shrill shrieks of a child, and a group of woman sympathisers, surrounding an agonised mother, rush in with a baby which has hurt its arm. No bones, however, are broken; and we leave the room while the surgeon is examining the poor screaming mite and go upstairs into the wards which are being got ready for the night. We go first into the children's ward where most of the little ones are asleep, but some are awake and tranquil, and one is coughing and crying feebly. It has abscess of the lungs, and there will evidently be a sharp struggle here with death, and heavy odds against the ultimate victory! One little poppet of three months old is sleeping quietly with its bottle by its side, and a broken thigh as the reason why it is here at all; one beautiful bright-eyed creature stares at us mutely as we pass before its bed, and wonder when those bad burns will be healed, and if it will ever grow up into maturity. It is a child lovely enough to have made the pride of many a wealthy house where heirs are wanting; in its own it has not so much care taken of it as our cook's pet cat receives, and it is an even chance whether it will ever live to grow up at all, running the gauntlet of the thousand dangers by which it is beset through ignorance, poverty, neglect, and evil conditions of all kinds. Here, again, is one whose arm is not much thicker than a penholder, and whose legs and body are wasted by starvation to less than the average size of a new-born infant. The Sister who is with us turns down the bedclothes from the unconscious sleeper, and we see what is not easily forgotten—that fearful evidence of hunger and want! How much that poor little creature of ten months old has already suffered! My lady's lap-dog is fed with the choicest dainties beyond the reach of the ordinary middle class; my lord's horses are pampered and petted till life within them waxes so strong that it turns to the hurt of those who have fostered it to such excess; but this poor little human being, this miserable child of man has been left to starve out of all semblance to its kind; so that as it lies there it is more like a monkey wanting the fur than the heir of all the ages, and the possessor

as we are taught to believe of an immortal soul. But what poverty has done on the one hand this good hospital is trying to undo on the other; and by a little judicious feeding and care perhaps our furless monkey may become once more human, and be placed in such conditions that its brain can grow and its body become strong. Another little creature is really—to unaccustomed eyes—an awful object. It has a hare-lip, and they are growing a (in a sense) new nose which exists at present as an engrafted bulb, and which is to be brought down and thrust into the cavity. This will then be sewn over it, and from a hideous gaping deformity that engrafted bulb will transform the mouth into something quite bearable, though always scarred and marked.

This is a wonderfully ingenious operation, more wonderful, indeed, than the famous Talcacotian; but we have by no means exhausted the possibilities of medical science, and as years pass by and knowledge increases we shall do something more yet than even make a hare-lip and cleft palate sightly and serviceable. About all the babies' cots are toys and pictures, some of which are retained for the amusement of the restless little wideawake; but the most part are laid aside till the sleeping time has passed, and the small sufferer wakes once more to life and light; and everywhere are flowers, supplied by the Flower Mission, and greatly prized by young and old. There are many, very many cases under seven years of age; and scalds, burns, broken limbs, and accidents generally are of terribly frequent occurrence among the children of the district.

Passing from the babies we go into the men's wards, where the lights are still turned up as the surgeon is making his last round for the night. A handsome young fellow, a slater, has his bitter portion dealt out to him in the shape of abscesses. One in his arm sucks all the strength out of him, he says with a sigh. Whatever food he puts into his body goes to feed it, not him—he is none the better for it! The bad place in his arm drains him dry as soon as he is full; and it's just a waste of good material, that's where it is in his opinion! He is unmarried, and he lived in lodgings where he had everything to do for himself; and when he was first taken ill and his back was so bad, it made him, he thinks, worse to have to do for himself with no one to help him. He is well off now, he says, and the gentlemen and nurses do all they can for him. In the same ward is another case of desperate, almost unmanageable ulceration; where five hundred bits of healthy skin have been taken from the living body and engrafted into the sore. This is a very common operation nowadays; and one lad bared his arm where a small scar showed that a

piece had been taken from it for his own leg. He was immensely proud of the transaction; so was another, whose ankle, he said, was like a map—he had a bit of a Scotchman and a bit of an Irishman in it, and Lord knows what more; good luck that he had not added a bit of a negro as well, repeating in the wards of the London Hospital the famous miracle of S.S. Cosmo and Damian in the desert!

The accident wards are full of painful interest, containing as they do men struck down in the prime of life, and from health and vigour reduced to helplessness and anguish. One fine fellow, a railway porter, was run over by an engine and desperately hurt, but not quite killed. He lay for six hours on the line before he was found and taken up. He is now recovering; but they have had a hard fight for it! Another was ripped right up the back, the spine being laid bare and the bones slightly injured; but neither concussion of the brain nor paralysis supervened, and he is now recovering, if slowly. One old man had been a teetotaller, to which he attributes his safe and speedy recovery from a horrible accident that befell him one unlucky day; and one man, a butcher, had the narrowest escape from unintentional suicide on the Japanese plan, for, missing his stroke, he cut, not the joint, but his own abdomen, and nearly bled to death before they could sew up the wound.

This hospital is, as we have said, the place, *par excellence*, for accidents, also, it would seem, for strange and skilful operations. There is a curious case of deformed leg at this moment under treatment, and we see both the cast of the original limb and the living member as now rearranged. This—a case of twisted knee—a knee so much turned inwards as to make the leg and thigh almost at right angles with each other. A small incision was made at the side of the knee, and then with a chisel and a hammer the bone was broken, and reset so as to make a straight limb. It was then slung in a fracture cradle; ice applied to the joint; in due time a weight attached to the foot to help in preventing contraction; and when the bone is thoroughly reset, the lad will be almost like any other, with perhaps a slight shortening of the leg that had been deformed. Another similar case, where both legs were in-kneed, was treated in the same manner, and a complete cure effected; and another of like nature was what is called ankylosis of the hips, that is, a complete stiffness by the joint becoming a solid mass with no play or action. This case, which we did not see, was that of a little street waif sent to the hospital by a London magistrate. He was between five and six years old, and both limbs were stiffened. Placed under the

proper anæsthetics the bones were broken as in the foregoing instances, and as so much marble might be crushed, and now the little fellow goes about gaily, fit to take his place with the rest of the running and walking race.

These tremendous operations would scarcely be possible without the two great blessings of what is called mixed narcosis and Lister's antiseptic treatment. The first consists of an injection of morphia under the skin, under the influence of which the patient is carried gently downstairs to the operating room. There he is further narcotised by chloroform or ether—the former if he be before twelve or after sixty; the latter if between those two periods, as ether is too stimulating for the very young or old—and the operation begins. The effect of the ether passes when the operation is completed; but that of the morphia remains, and the patient sleeps through what was once the worst time, thus lessening the chances of fever and preserving his strength. Pain naturally comes with the return of consciousness, but it is mitigated and can be borne better because there has been so much less exhaustion; also by the new method which almost totally prevents the loss of blood in amputation, much exhaustion and suffering are spared. But I will come to this presently. By Lister's antiseptic method of treating wounds and operations all fever is prevented, and pyæmia or gangrene is almost stamped out. The wound or place operated on is placed under a fine continuous carbolic spray; all the appliances of dressing are steeped in the same fluid; the wound is washed with carbolic acid; and no germs from the atmosphere—that source of infection and surgical fevers—can find a nidus where they can propagate. The wound heals kindly and in far less time than even under the most favourable natural conditions, thus preventing many after effects which are worse than the original evil. Thus, a poor lad was brought in with a wound in his forehead, from the inner corner of his eye upwards, which laid the bone bare, the skin lying down like a loose flap. Mr. Couper took the case in hand, and the boy so far aided in that he lay absolutely and rigidly still. The wound was first well cleansed with carbolic acid; the dressing was made under the Lister spray, the edges were adjusted as neatly as one adjusts the most delicate broken porcelain, then the skin was sewn up from the eye to the scalp. The boy had no fever, and in three days the wound was 'as dry as a bone.' Had there been inflammation or suppuration he would have lost his eyesight and perhaps his life. As it is, he escaped with a scar—*balafre* certainly for life—but with his eyesight unimpaired, and his health and reason as good as ever.

In the women's ward the most interesting case we see is that

of a delicate-looking girl who had been in a trance for a fortnight, during which time they had been forced to feed her through her nose. She is now scarcely awake to the world about her, half-dozing, half-swooning; but she can be roused; and the Sisters and nurses take care that she does not fall back into her old condition for want of rousing. Another case is that of a woman whose temperature rose to the incredible height of 112° , and yet she lives: and a case is recorded of a paradoxical temperature of 115° :—which surely could have lasted but a very short time, else the patient must have perished. The temperature card is the true storm-signal in all surgical cases. The dot gives the note of danger before the finger has found it out; and no matter how well the wound looks, the chart of the temperature tells its own tale, and when that is high bad results may be expected. But it seems that we have to modify the current belief that no one can live whose temperature goes beyond 107° . 'Temperature gone clean over the top of the card, sir!' says a bright-eyed Irishman; and that top of the card marks 108.

In the Jews' ward we come upon a different physiognomy and certain differences of condition. To begin with, the poorer Israelites have all a German's horror of ventilation, and draw their bed-curtains close about their heads and faces whenever they have the chance. They have all things separate and appropriate; their own meat killed according to the law by their own butcher; the two distinct waste-pipes, by which their own kitchen refuse is carried away, so that the washings of the plates and dishes where meat has been may not be mingled with other articles of food; during Passover separate milk; and a special cupboard where all utensils used during Passover are kept, and never touched nor even looked at in the interim. The cupboard might swarm with mice or cockroaches, red ants or blackbeetles, but it would not be opened even for the purposes of cleansing—so strict are these ancient people in the smallest as well as the greatest matters of their faith. A piece of Passover cake is fastened over the door of the ward appropriated to them, renewed yearly; and the Scroll of the Law, in a small tin cylinder, remains as the sign and shield of the race which it both demonstrates and protects.

As time wears on the most interesting experience begins. One by one the lights are turned down, and the wards are in that half-visible darkness proper to the sick room. Through the long corridors we see the dim figures of Sister and nurse quietly moving about the beds where the restlessness of the patient needs attention. Here a whispered conference between Sister and doctor marks something of importance—who knows what? There a

screen drawn round the bed, a bright light behind, and shadows thrown upward on the wall, betray the fact of some necessary operation—perhaps tapping a patient for dropsy, or it may be the sad watching for the last moment so near at hand. For the deaths are sometimes many in this hospital: not because of want of care and skill, emphatically No! but because the cases brought in are so exceptionally severe that not even all the care and skill of the best surgeons and physicians can save them. Seven hundred deaths in the year, or ten and a half per cent., rank high in the death average; but those who know why are not disheartened; on the contrary, the wonder is that there are not more.

In our rounds we come upon a private room where the night Sisters are at breakfast. It is about ten o'clock, and they have just finished what stands with them for our first morning's meal. They dine after midnight, and sup at nine A.M., when the ordinary working world is astir; then go to bed in the sunshine, and sleep while others play. It is a difficult habit to acquire at first, they say, but practice makes perfect here as elsewhere; and after a time nature accommodates herself to the new *régime*, and sleep comes as easily in the bright midday as it used in the quiet midnight.

It is too much the custom to think of our medical students as so many rollicking, rude Bob Sawyers, mainly occupied in wrenching off knockers and squaring up to the police; haunters of the Haymarket, proficient in slang, steeped to the lips in vulgar fastness all round; detestable moral embryos who may develop into decent men enough at the end of their transition stage, but who, during this stage, are simply abominable. A different idea of these young students from that cherished by ordinary prejudice, would be had in the wards of such a hospital as the 'London,' where often life has to be saved by main force, as it were, and workers must sacrifice themselves if any good is to be done. Take the case of that poor fellow who was brought in at death's door with an aneurism. Fourteen students volunteered to compress the artery, and the man was saved. And this compression of the artery means simply that some one stands by the bed with his finger pressed tight on the spot, never relaxing the pressure nor releasing the strain. For forty-four hours this compression was continued; then came the break of a day; then one strain of twenty-two hours more—and the man was saved. He was a fine stalwart fellow, a young engineer, into whose life these fourteen brave, good lads poured their own courage and strength and patient endurance. They gave up food and sleep and rest and pleasure, to take their turn at saving this unknown brother; and surely one

such living example as this ought to tell against twenty adverse fancy portraits. This instance too shows the good of great hospitals. Where else could such a volunteer force have been gathered together? Truly in some respects the poor are better tended in sickness than are the rich, and more successfully treated. In even the best organised private house, where an operation has to be performed, the surgeon has to think of everything that may be necessary, when, as he is not infallible, he may forget something. Here, in a large hospital, everything is at hand, everything is in the best possible working order, while dozens of assistants are ready and willing to supply such aid as may be necessary. It may as well be said here that the alternative to this long finger compression of the aneurism is a deep and dangerous incision, then hooking up the artery and tying it—an operation by no means always successful, and at all times full of peril.

Also that gradual perfecting of the plan to prevent loss of blood in amputation, due to Dr. Esmark, of Kiel, and already alluded to, is one of great interest and importance. The limb to be amputated is tightly bound in india-rubber bandages, beginning from the toes or fingers upward, until every drop of blood is expelled from the veins, and the limb is as blanched and bloodless as so much marble:—then above the point of amputation, a strong, widely-stretched india-rubber cord is tied, which prevents all circulation so absolutely that a man may almost perform the operation in his dress clothes, without a drop of blood being spilt. It is easy to understand what an immense boon this system is to the patient, and what a saving of strength by the reduction of exhaustion consequent on loss of blood.

And now our passage through the silent, dimly-lighted wards is over; and we go downstairs once more to the scene and centre of activity—to the place, too, of the End. A long passage below, in part leading round the open court, takes us to those two mournful rooms—the dead-house, where the coffins lie concealed in closed shelves, and the post-mortem room adjoining. There is only one occupant of that silent bed at this time, but once there were seventeen in one night—the most that have ever been at the same time. A poor little bundle lies on the table ready for the friends to take away—such a poor little bundle of ragged clothes!—such a mournful voiceless essay on the pains of poverty that had been endured—on the want, and misery, and ignorance, and starvation, that had slowly brought the wearer to the hospital first, to the churchyard last! These catacombs, as the room is called, are not only absolutely isolated from the rest of the building, but all connected with the dead is silent, separate, concealed. The bodies

are lowered to the dead-house by a separate lift, placed in the coffins, and taken away at night or early in the morning. No one sees or hears or is shocked or startled. It is all done with silent reverence for the dead and thoughtful care for the living; and one cannot help feeling that in most instances this death is a release, and eternity sweet repose.

Then we go back to the entrance again; look into the padded room where they place, say, the dipsomaniacs, or others suffering from delirium or mania not manageable by other methods, and where once a powerful maniac nearly throttled the strongest man in the establishment; and as one last experience we look into the operating room, which is in full light but untenanted. Here we pry into the large glass case of instruments, where we read strange labels, such as 'guillotines' for the tonsils and 'butcher's saws' for the larger bones; and where are bone forceps and knives, needles and scoops, and instruments for cleft palates, and a wealth of ingenuity in form and intention which makes us simply marvel.

And then we take our leave of the kind guides and interpreters who have accompanied and explained; and as we drive back through the darkened and deserted streets, we say one to the other that the London Hospital deserves to be more widely known and more vigorously supported than even it is; for that what we have seen of pain relieved, sickness healed, and death prevented—of human care and kindness devoted to the mitigation of human suffering—of science and intellect and education all employed and improved for the service of the race—what this one little experience of one short night has shown us—proves the exceeding value of the institution:—which may God bless and man maintain!

A Hero's Reward.

A SKETCH FROM LIFE.

BY OUIDA.

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GUALDRO SONCINI was an old man ; he had been a soldier from his youth up ; he had served under Carl Alberto and Victor Emmanuel ; he had been wounded in the thigh at Novara, in the hip at Solferino ; he had known sickness and suffering in camp and in hospital ; he had lost an arm in carrying a comrade from under the fire of the enemy's battery in his last campaign ; he was seventy-five years old ; he had an old wife and three little orphan penniless grandchildren ; he had small earnings and heavy burdens ; he was very nearly blind, but he was very cheerful, as became an old soldier. When the conscripts went by him muttering in discontent, he would say to them, ' Fie for shame ! It is a hard life—ay—but a fine one. None better becomes a man.'

He had had three sons once, and they had all died in battle, but no one thought much of that ; so many have sons that died so. He would think of them himself very often with pride, and say to the three little hungry grandchildren, ' When you grow up, if you draw the number, you will go willingly, and do your best ; your fathers did their best, poor lads, and I mine too, though it did not come to much.'

Meanwhile, he was very poor.

He had helped at making cart-wheels till his age and infirmities grew great, and no one would employ him ; it was hard work to face all the little hungry mouths, and he would not send one of them to the Bigallo. He lived in an attic, in a crowded and narrow street, and his wife was palsied and bedridden ; nevertheless, he was always cheerful. ' Ah, lads, I was a good soldier !' he would tell the young men, and would still feel very proud ; it is better to have been a brave man than a coward ; it leaves a glow about the heart even when the limbs are stiff and numb with age.

Gualdro knew he had been a brave man, and he was quite happy ; he would laugh with the babies, and go out in the sun on messages, and feel for the medals on his breast that he was getting too blind to see well, and now and then sit under the trees in the Cascine, and watch to see his General go riding by—his young General as he thought him who, when he could catch his eye, would give him a smile of recognition—his General, whom he would call, without prefix or title, as all the city did, Lamarmora.

With him Gualdro would always have one or two of the little children and his dog.

His dog, who was as old for a dog as he for a man, had been picked up by him on the field after Magenta, where it had lain a mere puppy by the body of a dead officer. Tamburino, *anglicè* Drummer, was not at all valuable or handsome; he was half mastiff, half bulldog, grey with age, and with a broad, ugly, frank face, and no tail at all; but he was the idol of the children, the guardian of the sick woman, and the friend of his master.

'Looking at Drummer, anyone can see he is King Honestman, too, in his way,' would Gualdro say, and tell, with as much pride almost as he showed his own medals, how the dog had marched and countermarched with him over the burning plains of Lombardy, and been wounded once by a spent bullet.

Altogether, they were very happy, Gualdro, and the children, and the dog, though they climbed a hundred and twenty stairs to their garret, and went all of them, very often, supperless to bed.

Once or twice Gualdro was summoned for having a dog without a license. A lady who knew him paid the fine for him; Gualdro could not understand why it was a crime to have a dog.

'And he has fought the Austrians!—tooth and claw; he himself has fought them!' he would cry. They told him that had nothing to do with it. He could not understand; he and Drummer and the babies sat in the shade or the sun as the weather was, and could not see what harm they did.

Drummer would watch the people go by, with his eyes still bright under his broad forehead and his funny square mouth opened to get the air in comfortably, as nature tells a dog to do; and when the grave General rode past them on his roan horse he would give a kindly glance to the dog as well as to the veteran; and then Gualdro was happy for all the week.

'He does not forget,' Gualdro would say to himself, and it solaced him to think that his General remembered, if his country did forget, as all countries do whether they are free or fettered, regenerated or unregenerated.

Gualdro could not read and could not write, but he was no fool; he had been no mere fighting machine, but a true soldier of the War of Independence. In the days of Carl Alberto he had been smitten with the lightning fires of liberty, and had dreamed his dream, not a base or sordid one, and had known what he had wanted when he had chaunted the '*Fuori il stranier*,' in moonlit summer marches, or in crowded theatres of carnival.

The leaders of the revolution might have their own baser ends, and more selfish hopes, but Gualdro had been a simple rustic sol-

dier, and had hated the stranger, and had done his best honestly, and risking life and limb, to serve his country. That was all.

The chiefs of the national movement lived in fine houses, and fared sumptuously every day, but the old soldier had much ado to get litre of broth for his children's children; yet he did not complain. 'The men that had the brains, they made a good thing of it. They've sheared the lamb after saving it. As for me, I was only good to carry the knapsack,' he would say, and that is not a calling that any country can prize very highly.

'I was only good to fight,' he would say sorrowfully, realising dimly that he had been only one of the mules that had dragged the stones for building up the temple of liberty, and that the only payment to the mules was a kick a-piece.

Yet he did not grumble, not he. He was a cheerful old man, and if he could only get something to do was happy.

Unhappily in this world something to do is not always obtainable; when you are very poor, and want it very much, it becomes almost certainly as impossible to find as the philosopher's stone.

'I used to be a smith; yes, that was my trade,' said Gualdro once when his tongue waxed warm with a little wine that was given him, wine that was only twopence a flask, but was too dear for him to buy it for all that. 'Yes, that was my trade and my father's before me. We lived out Settimo way, ay, it was pretty then. The trees were not felled as they are now. I shod horses. When I was a little chap I remember the Frenchmen's horses coming through; my father would not shoe them. Poor Babbo ran away, and I with him, and we hid in the hedges about the Badia. I might have done well if I had stuck to my trade, yes, but I went fighting. It seemed to me stupid to sit still and beat iron when there were enemies and tyrants to be beaten. That was my idea. I do not know that I was right. If I had stayed at my forge in Settimo perhaps the world would have wagged as well, and I been wiser. But there! what would you? One never knows! Who can say the pear is sound till he cuts it?' and then he pulled his old canvas shirt open and showed his chest with the marks of a sabre wound and of a shot wound in it. 'All the scars are in front of me,' he said with pride, and perhaps in displaying them he was happier than he would have been at a smithy in Settimo, with a horse of his own and money in the bank, and a bit of kid and some fried artichokes smoking on his board on feast-days. As it was, he never tasted meat at all, and artichokes only when they were stale on the street stall. He lived in one room, and lived as best he could in a ruined house in the Pignone; unsavoury, tumbledown, often inundated, with the unsavoury muddy

waters of the Arno on one side, and a refuse-heap on the other. The river at sunrise would be lovely as the green sea, and at sunset would glow with the hues of the opal, and all its mud and sand become transformed to gold; but none of the glory of it could be seen from his high chamber, with its little window buried out of sight in the damp wall. Now and again in winter or spring flood the river would break into the house, and make it chilly, nauseous, unhealthy, and go away again leaving slime and sand behind it; and that was all the grand poetic world-honoured water ever did for him. It gave him rheumatism too, and a touch of ague, yet he cared for it; when he was washing his shirt in it, or letting his boys paddle of summer nights, he would look at it lovingly: it did him much harm and no good, but it was a grand thing, and he liked it. He was fond of the Arno as he was of his country; neither of them had ever done anything for him, but he was proud of them, nevertheless.

The people who cling to ideas in this way are very silly, no doubt, yet they are the only people who make life at all noble. One sad day his General died, his great General whom all the world honoured. Gualdro Soncini made one of the many mourners, as the dark, stately pomp of the great military funeral moved through the ancient streets, that had been all baptised with new names, but could not be defrauded of their old honour and their old history. Gualdro's heart was heavier than before. He missed the kindly smile that answered his salute; he missed pointing the great soldier out to strangers and saying proudly, 'Ecco il mio Generale—eccolo!'

A month or two later he saw the General's horse dragging the heavy, stinking cart of the manure company; of the good people who empty the cesspools of the city and pour nameless filth out over the corn-fields by way of decreasing fever and diphtheria.

Gualdro felt a knife in his heart.

'And they will give him a statue—a hundred statues!—and they let his brave horse toil there!' he said in his pain and his wrath. But then he was a simple man, and did not understand the policies of great families and vain-glorious nations which is 'to save at the spigot and pour out at the bung-hole,' as a homely English saw has it.

After that Gualdro felt more lonely. When the floods swamped him, and when the breadpot was empty, things seemed harder to bear than before. He had never asked his General for anything, but he had always felt that in any very terrible extremity he might; and once the General had called him 'bambino mio'—'bambino mio,' and he seventy years old!—and they had both

laughed, and felt that after all they were both soldiers, and so equals; and now all that was over for ever—for ever! And the horse toiled in the manure-cart, and the old man felt alone.

Still, there was Drummer, and there were the babies—the little merry brown babies, tumbling about over the old dog, and putting their little fists down his red jaws. Drummer had his own occupations, and those were serious ones. He would watch the children when they were asleep, and snap at the flies and centipedes that approached them; he guarded the linen when it was spread out to dry on the sand by the river; and he caught rats, the big, abounding rodents that swarm by the Arno, he caught them by the score with a sharp, sudden death-bite, and then flung them away as offal, however hungry he might be, for Drummer knew that he was intended by nature to have higher views touching bulls and bears, and that rats were too poor prey for him, only they worried his master, and frightened the bed-ridden woman and the babies, so he hunted them.

‘He kills them like a Christian!’ Gualdro would say, with pride; and the rats were the only creatures that the strong, good-humoured, valiant beast ever injured. Drummer was beloved by all the Pignone, and was perfectly happy lying by the edge of the river watching the boats, and the nets, and the washing-women, when his mind was at peace as to rats.

The fine new times that Gualdro had done his best to bring about worried him as they worried all the populace with fines and contraventions and all manner of petty legal tormentings if a man did but set his chair out on the pavement, or let his dog run about, or cry his goods at wrong hours, or do any other little thing that he had been always used to do before Freedom had been heard of in street corners. Gualdro was a very honest man; he had never wittingly done any harm or cheated anyone; when he could pay for his bit of bread he bought it; when he could not he went without it. Yet he was always being told that he transgressed the law; he was always seeing those long slips of printed paper which broke the heart of the poor who nine times out of ten cannot even read them.

‘If a man do his duty as he sees it, and molests nobody, and has to pay his way, ought they to be at him?’ Gualdro would ask in perplexity; he could not understand it.

‘If one gets tormented so for nothing at all one may as well do something wicked,’ said his neighbour on the stairs, a broom-maker.

‘Ay, they’ll let you alone then,’ said a shrew who was another neighbour. ‘A year ago some brutes they set on my poor man and

knifed and beat him all for nothing, and they go scot free ; as for us there comes the *usciera* a hundred times a year, if one forgets to pay a centime or sets a flower-pot on a sill.'

They were very perplexed in Pignone, but they were told it was liberty ; even when some ricketty chairs and a copper-pot or two were raised to the dignity of 'furniture riches' and rated accordingly. The upshot of this impression, when it has had a little more time to settle down into the minds of the people everywhere, will not be comfortable for us. It will be very favourable to Nihilism.

Gualdro, who was a patient obedient person as soldiers mostly are, was saddened by this usage, not made rebellious.

One of his babies died, the prettiest ; the doctor said the great public refuse-heap hard by had given it its mortal 'ball in the throat,' as they call diphtheria, but the refuse-heap stank on by municipal permission. On the strip of garden ground by his house a grand jessamine covered the wall, he had planted it, and his landlord let him call it his own, and the flowers of it brought a few pence ; they ordered him to cut it away, as it was against the law to have a shrub hang over the wall ; as he delayed to do it, he was fined, and his bush was destroyed. A scoundrel swore a debt of twenty francs against him falsely ; he could not understand the summons to the court, and only called out stupidly through Pignone, 'Not a soldo do I owe, not a soldo. I never did, that the good saints know.' But the saints do not look into law courts, and at the petty tribunal a petty officer gave the verdict against him, and ordered him to pay ten francs more for contumacy. As he had not the money the *usciera*, who represents Fate to the multitude, came and took away his copper pots and pans, and the bed that was under his wife. 'Is this just ?' said Gualdro halt beside himself. 'It is law !' said the *usciera*.

Florentines are a patient people ; the old soldier said nothing more.

'If I had owed it I would not have minded,' he told his neighbours, and they, poor though they were, contrived amongst them to give him another bed.

'These are the fine times you fools fought for, Gualdro,' the neighbour who was a shrew would say ; and Gualdro would shake his head and, from habit's sake, take out his cold pipe, which he could not afford to light.

'It would come right if we got the republic,' said the broom-maker.

But Gualdro shook his head.

'Nay, nay ; every hungry stomach in the country then would be gobbling at the public pot. That would never do.'

'Then what would?' said the broom-maker tartly. Gualdro could not tell.

An old soldier at seventy years old cannot solve problems that would have been too tough for Cavour.

The general result in the Pignone was much as it is everywhere else, to produce a sort of conviction that it was of no use trying to be decent and honest; the law worried you if you were innocent, as much as if you were not.

It is the triumph of modern governments to produce this conviction in the populace.

It was then early in summer.

The summer was the worst time for him because the strangers were all away; and there were one or two foreign ladies for whom Gualdro went errands and did little things, with Drummer trotting at his heels; but when the vines came in flower the ladies went away, and the summer was hard to him, most of all, the close of the summer was hard, because there was nothing to do in the city that lay baking under the sun, and there were still two little curly-headed children and the sick wife and Drummer to feed. Occasionally he got a little work, or caught some fish, or did some errands, and so rubbed on, but it was hard work, and not seldom he would go without his own bit of bread to give it to the dog, 'Piuttosto a lui che a me,' he would say.

One evening, having nothing to do, he took the babies out with him, and Drummer.

It was the close of a very hot day in midsummer; the heat lay in heavy mists over the city and its river, and the hills around were all pale and dust-coloured in it. Happy people, and people who though not happy yet had the means to move about or go into the country, were travelling through distant lands of glaciers and forests, or sitting out on marble terraces watching the fire-flies glisten under the leaves. But in the city it was terribly oppressive, and the multitude that always remains captive when a town is called empty were loitering about the piazzas or lying on the stone benches, hot, weary, and feverish.

But the little children were merry and Drummer was joyous, and the old soldier felt at peace with the world, though it did send him law-summonses that he could not understand and made it hard trouble for him to get his daily bread and beans.

They had gone up on to the new public drive that passes by grand old San Miniato and has so sadly spoilt the once wild hill-side, scarring it with a white seam as you look upwards at it from road below. But Gualdro was not much concerned
sweetness; the bench he sat on rested him, the

air was fresher on the height, the children were toddling about with Drummer, there was some music sounding from the café hard by, gay waltz music that set the babies' feet dancing.

A lemon-seller went by with his gilded pagoda-like truck; and knowing Gualdro, gave the babies a drink for love and good-will, which did Gualdro as much good as if anybody had brought him a draught of wine. 'After all,' he thought, 'there is always someone that is kind.'

The sun went down and the glow from its setting made the mountains beyond Vallombrosa rosy-red; little stars began to shine; the grey dusty hues of a long hot day changed to the blue shades of evening. He thought it was time to take his way homeward, for the children were fatigued with play and grew sleepy. He took one up on each arm, and began to stroll home, the dog at his heels.

When he got down from the comparatively fresh air of the hillside into the stifling heat of the town, about the Porta Romana, there were some people shouting, scuffling, screaming, there were cries of a mad dog.

One of the dogs from the country—dogs there pass their poor lives too often straining at the end of a short chain, and are starved and beaten, and even thirsty all day long, since no one thinks of their wants, and their shallow water-pan is quickly dried by the sun, and made noisome by dead insects—had strayed down into the city, driven by the pangs of hunger to seek for something to devour, and there, from long ill-usage and long torment of all times, had snapped at a man who had kicked him aside, and had fallen writhing in an epileptic fit; the harmless canine epilepsy which soon passes if the animal be left alone.

But instead of leaving him alone, or even enquiring what was the matter with him, the populace (always and everywhere, coward, as well as bully) had raised the cry of mad dog, and two street scavengers were knocking the dog to pieces with their iron hoes, while the guards looked on in approval. These spectacles are considered improving for the people.

The poor animal in his epilepsy was hardly conscious, though his body struggled under the agony, the street was flooded with blood, the street boys capered and howled with delight, and the man at whom the dog had flown, though only his trousers had been touched, was yelling like a mad creature himself, and crying: 'Son' morto! son' morto! Gesù m'aiuta!'

Gualdro, who looked away from the horrible sight, for he liked all dumb beasts, was hurrying by, not to let his grandchildren see the blood. Drummer, with ears pricked, and all

his body quivering, was standing still, and staring at the still writhing body of his mangled brother. One of the guards threw a looped cord over his head and choked him.

'Let my dog go!' cried Gualdro. 'He has done nothing. It is not him they are crying out against.'

The guard drew the rope tighter, and held Drummer motionless, and powerless to utter a sound.

'Your brute was by when the mad dog passed,' he said. 'He may have been bitten. He must go under observation.'

'Under observation!' stammered Gualdro; 'what has he done? Let him go—pray let him go—you will choke him! Look how his eyes are starting!'

'Hold your tongue, or I will arrest you for impeding me in my duty,' said the guard, and he flung Drummer on his back by a haul at the rope. One of the dog-stranglers that are employed all summer by the civic *giunta* was near at hand, and the guard beckoned him and gave him the rope; 'Throw him in the cart, and take him to the slaughter-house,' he said, attending in no way to the master of Drummer.

The old man with the child on each arm was as helpless as the dog with the noose round his neck. He implored, he wept, he even fell on his knees on the stones, and made the little terrified children kneel too. But it was of no use. The guard was immovable, and the populace was for once on the side of the law, because its own precious safety its thought, was imperilled. Gualdro, who had stood the brunt of so much smoke and the blaze of so much steel in battle, was trembling like a leaf. All the instincts of the old soldier were towards obedience; and he was bewildered, dazed, agonised, but he was patient still.

'What does it all mean?' he said, stupidly turning his dim eyes on the faces of the crowd—faces that had no sympathy in them—for the people were all afraid for themselves, though the poor mangled sheep-dog lay dead in the midst of his blood, and Drummer had been hurled into the dog-cart of the dog-strangler.

'It means a municipal regulation, my friend,' said the voice of an Englishman with a good influx of irony in it. 'Municipal regulations are amongst the blessings for which you good fellows fought.'

But Gualdro did not understand.

'My dog did no harm,' he said piteously as a low howl came from the covered cart.

'You can get him in forty days, if you pay what is wanted,' said the guard coldly, and then turned away to collar an urchin who was throwing a wooden ball about. The cart moved on; Gualdro was left standing, the two little babies clinging to his knees.

Then suddenly he caught them up and ran with them in his arms after the cart

'Stop, stop! Pray stop! do have pity!' he cried to them. 'I am an old soldier; I have fought in every battle, little and big; yes, I have; my poor Drummer—what is the matter with him? Give him to me—give him to me!'

But the dog-takers only laughed, and the cart was pushed on; the men with the lassoes following, looking about the empty streets for dogs.

'It is of no use running and praying,' said a beggar-man who was limping by. 'They will not give him to you, no, not if it were ever so; you go to the slaughter-house in the morning; they will not have killed him; not so soon.'

'Killed him!' echoed Gualdro. It hurt him as when at Custazza he had heard them say, 'We are beaten!' and it bewildered him as that had done.

'It will be all right in the morning,' said the beggar, trying to console him. 'Do not make these men angry, or they will knock him on the head, ay, that they will.'

'But the lady pays the tax for me!'

'What has that got to do with it? Everybody pays taxes, but taxes don't give you any right at all except to pay more of them. I am glad they cannot get them out of me,' said the beggar with a grin.

Gualdro did not even hear. He ran panting after the cart, calling the men every bad name with which long years in barracks and in tent life could have stored his memory. But they went on out of his sight, throwing back to him as a last greeting a jeer and a curse. He was old and not very quick of foot, and they, out of sport or spite, or both, had gone forward at a trot, jolting the poor living burdens in their cart over the stones, regardless of the moans and howls within.

Gualdro had the two little children to carry; they were still crying; he stopped, his heart seeming to break at the thought of leaving Drummer in such hands as these—stopped and hushed the babies with a few half-conscious words, and wondered what on earth he could do. The evening was still young, but it was starless and extremely hot. The air, used as he was to it in its heat seemed to suffocate him; there was nothing he could do, except go back to his wife, who would be alarmed at his absence, and then go out again or wait till morning broke.

He went back, hurrying as much as limbs stiff with age and rheumatism would allow him, and mounted the stairs to his one little room, where the old woman lay on the borrowed bed. She

made her little moan about his long absence and her own pain and infirmity, being a selfish soul and much racked with ague and fever and all the woes of age. He tried to answer her cheerfully, though the tears were all in his throat, as he got the babies out of their few clothes, and laid them, half-asleep, down on the sack and old rug that served them as a cradle. The eldest one, sleepy as she was, in her sleepiness kept sobbing and crying for To-to, which was all she could say of Drummer's name; he was used to lie close to them all night, and the child through her mist of slumber was missing his broad, good-humoured face, and the good-night kiss of his rough tongue.

'Where is the dog?' asked the old woman from her bed.

Gualdro answered, as cheerfully as he could, 'I have lost him. I must go out and look.'

'Lost him? Che, che!' grumbled the old woman. 'He knows the city as well as a Christian. He will come scratching at the door in a minute.'

Gualdro could not speak.

'I think I had better go and look,' he said, after a pause, while he gave his wife a little bread and a drink of water—there was nothing else in the chamber.

He then went out and went across the town a long, long way, to the public slaughter-place. When he reached there it was shut for the night; he could make no one hear. He was very weary, but he would not go away; he walked to and fro, as in his earlier years he had paced to and fro when on guard in the long winter nights on the ice-cold plains of Lombardy, till some one that knew him spoke to him in the street, and said:

'What is the use of doing that? You cannot get your dog till dawn, when the gates will open for the beasts to come in off the railway. Go home and try and get some money, for without money, take my word, old Drummer will be as dead as a door-nail.'

Gualdro went homeward again, in despair. Where could he get money? His ladies were away, and his General was dead. He had nothing to sell, since the *usciere* had taken all his pots and pans and his few sticks of furniture, and if he asked charity in the streets he would be arrested, because he had never been able to bring his pride down to get the official permission to beg as a legalised pauper, which might, perhaps, if he had asked for it, have been accorded to him under Article 102, No. 8, of the Communal and Provincial Laws.

He did not know what to do.

He would have sold even his medals to save Drummer, but they would have had the law on him even for that. He wandered up and down, to and fro, in the street, finding the short night, very

long. He could hear the howling of dogs in this miserable place, and he knew that one was the voice of his own old friend.

He hung about there till morning broke—another sultry, heavy morning, with the sky a haze of white heat. The first wretched animals came in towards the slaughter-house; bullocks, footsore, and galled, and bruised, that, having toiled for years over the land at the plough and in the cart, were now brought to end their days there; lambs, alive and quivering, hung in long rows on to the wooden framework of waggons, their heads downward, their eyes starting; all the sad, terrible procession of sacrifice that enters every city at dawn to feed the human multitude that calls desert-animals beasts of prey, went by him in the hazy, sickly daybreak. But he scarcely noticed them; he only pressed forward in hope to save Drummer. It was still too early. He was pushed about amongst cross and sleepy underlings, and told to return at ten o'clock. It was then not five. Might he not see his dog? he asked piteously. He was told sharply, no; he must wait till he saw an Inspector.

He went back to his room in Pignone. There was no one to do anything for his wife and the children except himself. He only told them that he could not find Drummer; he could not bear to tell them the truth. The old wife began to sob, and the babies cried aloud. They wanted old Drummer; where was Drummer? A rat had sat on the rug and frightened them all night. Go, get Drummer!

Gualdro, with his heart half-broken, did for them all that was needful, and warmed them a little weak coffee, and then went out again, the neighbour, who was a shrew, promising to look after them in his absence. All the many dwellers of the house were out on the stairs, and were all talking of Drummer, and sorrowing for him. Some children were crying, and the men were cursing the Government. These tyrannies of petty laws in their wisdom hurt the authority of the State more with the populace than all the severity of a Draconian code against great offences. Petty laws may annoy, but can never harm the rich, for they can always evade them or purchase immunity; but petty laws on the poor are as the horse-fly of the forests on the neck and on the eyelids of the horse.

Were modern law-makers wise, they would make their laws as few, as brief, and as stern as the commands of the Decalogue. But then what would become of the Bureaucracy, and of all those hosts who live by the public as the fly by the horse?

Gualdro, with all the eager, voluble, noisy sympathy of the Pignone pursuing him, went once more on his way to the slaughter-house yards. It was ten o'clock. He was told he must

wait yet another hour. The Superintendent was busy. He waited the hour, not having broken his fast. The horrid smell of blood was in the air of the place. He had not been faint before the sight of carnage or in the face of death, but here he felt sick and trembled. The neighbouring bells were all ringing; it was saint's day; but within, the poor beasts were dying that the whole human race might be fed.

At last some one in authority there said to him, 'What do you want here?' The person spoke roughly; he was a rough, coarse man, whom the people called, for his brutality in his office, Il Mastino.

Gualdro told him his tale, his voice and his hand shaking with agitation and weakness.

'May I not have my dog?' he said piteously, as he ended his narrative. 'Here is the tax of the year; all paid for him; a lady paid it.'

Mastino eyed the paper sharply, anxious to find it incorrect if possible.

'That has nothing to do with it,' he said savagely. 'The dog is here for surveillance. You must pay twenty francs for his maintenance and fifteen for contravention of the law in having had him loose on the street.'

'I will try!' faltered Gualdro with dry lips and sinking heart. 'O, for the love of God let me see him.'

'You can see him if you bring the money. But you cannot remove him till forty days.'

'But what has he done?'

'Do not answer me,' thundered the man in authority. 'If you answer me I will put a brace of bullets through your cursed beast's head. You will find I am master here!'

For it is thus that the public which pays the taxes is answered by those who are its servants.

'Let me see him!' stammered Gualdro beside himself with pain. The man in authority turned on his heel. 'Send that madman out of the yard,' said he to one of his underlings. The underling, who was more kindly of nature (for an Italian is always kind in small things when he is not changed into an *impiegato*, a creature that is always insolent, cringing, venal, and brutal according to the company he is in) touched the old soldier now upon the arm and spoke to him. 'Go and get the money, or you can do nothing here; and if you provoke him, he will have your brute killed, ay, that for sure.'

'But let me see him!' pleaded Gualdro, two slow tears coming down his old bronzed cheeks. The underling hesitated.

'Well, I will let you do that, though it will cost me my place if he ever know. Go out by that door and wait for me.'

Gualdro staggered out and waited; it seemed to him ages before the man rejoined him.

'He is out of the way,' the man whispered, at last returning. 'Come, I will give you a glimpse of the dog. Poor brutes! they get a hard time enough of it here.'

Gualdro followed him through many winding ways to a low door in a passage; the door opened into a narrow low dark cell, so dark that scarcely anything was visible except some eyeballs glaring in the gloom. But Gualdro heard a sound that made his heart leap; it was the wild, choked bark of Drummer.

As his sight grew accustomed to the darkness he saw four dogs, two large, two small, chained in that infernal hole, with collars so tight that they could scarcely breathe, the chains passing from right to left so that they could not stir; in torture that men nowadays would not inflict on the vilest murderer that fouls the earth, yet to which they think nothing of condemning the innocent dumb beasts that have done no harm, and only ask to live in peace their simple humble lives.

'That is the way we wiseacres have of preventing dogs from going mad,' said the underling with a grin.

Gualdro did not heed; he had fallen on his knees by Drummer. Drummer was throttling himself in his frantic joy with efforts to get free to join his master.

'And to think he has fought the Austrians!' said Gualdro with a sob in his throat.

He was an old soldier, and not much given to passionate emotion at any time, but with his hands holding the dog's head to his breast he kissed him, he wept over him, he clung to him, he swore bitter furious oaths that surely would be pardoned like the oath of Uncle Toby, were there any angels in creation to hear.

But the man behind him shook him by the shoulder and forced him up. 'Come away if you would not ruin me and yourself, and get the dog killed too,' he said, not unkindly, but dragging him upward. 'If Mastino should find us here he will put me out of the gates for ever, and shoot your poor beast or have him poisoned. Come.'

'Wait quietly, my bambino; wait in patience, my comrade, my good dear friend, my old Tamburino!' murmured Gualdro in passionate fondness to the dog, who crouched down obedient to his bidding but shivered in his chains and moaned, while his four-footed companions in captivity howled in chorus with him, a choked wailing howl, for they were half-strangled by their fetters.

Gualdro got out into the light of day once more, how he never knew; and staggered into the street.

'And to think he has fought the Austrians!' he said with a curse in his throat.

'Go and get the money,' whispered the underling who had befriended him. 'They will not let him out, but perhaps they will let him live.'

'Live in that hole! choked like that!'

'It is the way we cure mad dogs,' said the other man, with a sardonic grin.

'But he is not mad!'

'But he will be mad. A few days of darkness and chains will do it; then we can kill him, or send him to the doctors to cut up, that is our way.' Gualdro groaned aloud.

'O devils incarnate!' he yelled. 'And the dog went through Solferino and Magenta, and was wounded at Custozza and fought Austrians tooth and claw—fought them himself!'

'We've had heroes enough,' said the man with a grin. 'We want money now. Go find the money. Then perhaps you can get him—perhaps.'

Gualdro went home—his head swam, his limbs shook; he was old and he had eaten nothing. He went home to his own old quarters, where the Law had cut down his jessamine tree, and taken the bed from under his wife; the law of the land he had fought to free. He gathered the people about him on the rough yellow shores by the river where Drummer had used to sit and watch the outspread linen; only the very poor people, the men filling the carts with sand, the men dipping their huge square nets in the water, the women washing clothes in the stream, the children playing under the sunburnt river wall.

They all came round him as he staggered into the midst of them, his grey hair streaming back, his bronzed face looking black and ashen grey; for they saw that something grave had befallen him, and the Italians are quick in sympathy, if they be not strong in action.

In bitter words he told his tale.

'And he fought the Austrians!' he cried when he had told it. 'Tooth and claw he fought them; he has the marks of their powder and ball on him still; he was a small thing at Solferino, but never did he flinch; he has been braver than men, and truer; he fought the Austrians, and he lies in chains. It is vile—vile—vile—chained there, and in the dark! a creature that has no sin; and all over the land there goes the murderer or the robber, free to murder or rob again! It is vile—vile—vile! And in a few days he will be mad or dead. For how can I find the money they ask? I would sell the medals they gave me—ay, I would sell

them for the dog. But they would put me in prison for that. What can I do? What can I do?’

‘You shall have all the money we have!’ the people cried. ‘You are an old soldier, and were a brave one. You shall have all the pence we can get. Yes, the law is vile. There is the freedom you fought for, poor soul! But that was no fault of yours, no fault at all!’

Then quickly vieing one with another, they poured out all they had, diving in ragged trouser pockets and under rough torn skirts to find the little they all were worth.

Close-fisted these people are and very narrow in means, and Stenterello is their type on the popular stage, yet they can be capable of noble and generous moments. This was one. They were only poor boatmen and fishermen, washerwomen and straw-plaiters, and beggars some of them, yet was there not one that did not give; scores of battered copper pieces and here and there a crumpled note of fifty centimes, and one little tiny child, a brown, curly, dirty cherub like Del Sarto’s children, ran into the house and brought out a whole bright centime-bit that had been given her to buy a bunch of cherries. ‘Take for poor To-to!’ she cried. ‘Take my money too for To-to!’

Then Gualdro broke down and hid his face in his hands. Alas! the money when counted only came up to fifteen francs; there were not altogether forty people there on that sunburnt shore, and most of those who had given would be pinched of wine or of tobacco for the rest of the week themselves. It was only fifteen francs, when all was said and done that could be, and the little crowd stood wistfully eyeing the heap of metal with the little shining one-centime bit lying uppermost.

‘Perhaps they would let me have him for that?’ said Gualdro with doubt, and yet with hope in his mind.

‘Surely they would, if you said you would pay all the rest. Everyone knows you are an honest man,’ said one of the freshwater fishermen.

Gualdro sighed wearily; he doubted whether that was enough.

‘I will try,’ he said, while the tears fell down his face. ‘The Saints and Our Lady reward you; you have been very good to me.’

Then he turned to return to where the dog was, not waiting to take bit or drop.

‘Bring To-to back!’ piped the little child who had given her centime-piece.

Gualdro stooped, kissed her, and went.

When he reached the slaughter-house and asked for the official who had the keys of life and death for the poor four-footed prisoners,

they took him once more before the man whom the populace called Il Mastino. The old soldier held out to him, trembling, the fifteen francs, the coppers filling his quivering hands.

'My neighbours have helped me,' he said. 'I could not get any more. It is fifteen francs. Would you take it and let me have him? I will work day and night to pay the rest; I will go without bread. Oh! for the love of God, do let me have him, the poor, poor innocent thing!'

The man whom they called Il Mastino swore a fierce oath, and yelled to him, 'Out of the place, you beggar! If you say one word more, I will blow the brains out of your dog, and if one shot does not do for him he shall have two; he shall have three! I am the master here.'

Then he had Gualdro put out of the gates.

The old man stood in the blazing sun, mute and blind as a statue is. No hope was left him; nothing but a blank despair.

A lady passed by half an hour later, and saw him still there. She was a stranger in the city, but she was struck by the strange look of the old soldier standing in the full sun, his eyes fixed on vacancy, his medals hanging on his rough blue shirt, his hands full of coins.

She paused, touched his arm, and asked if he were ill.

He drew his breath with effort, and stared upon her stupidly; she spoke to him again, and he understood.

He told her his tale.

She was in haste, and could not wait there, but she read truth in every word he spoke, in every line of his worn ashen face; she drew out her purse, and poured thirty francs into his hand, and bade him be of good hope.

'With that you must get your dog. They cannot refuse you, surely. Go in and show them you have all they ask.'

Gualdro listened bewildered and incredulous; then an immense joy broke in on him.

'It is the Madonna herself that helps me, come in human guise!' he cried, and would have stooped and kissed the hem of her garment, but she was already gone with the summer light on her path.

Gualdro drew himself erect, smoothed out the notes, and with his pulses beating high and firm, knocked once more at the gates of the place of death.

It was now full noon.

'I have brought the money—all the money,' he shouted aloud. 'Now he is safe; now he is mine. I have all the money!'

Everyone in the yard was silent.

'I have all the money,' he cried again. 'Our Lady has come

on earth in a woman's shape, a woman with fair hair. I have all the money. Dear sirs, take the money and give me my dog; let me see my dog.'

The tyrant whom the populace called Il Mastino came forward; he looked sullen, angry, and ashamed.

'Your dog is dead,' he said.

'Dead!'

The word rang through the yard far above the lowing of cattle, the shrieks of swine, the bleating of lambs, the shouting of men.

'He choked himself with his chain; it was an accident,' said the tyrant, and his face flushed with heavy rage; he was safe in saying it; who could prove that the dog had been poisoned?

The teeth of Gualdro set; his eyes blazed with a fearful light; his face was dark and terrible as on a day of battle his foes had seen it.

'Bring out my dog,' he said. 'Bring out my dog, living or dead.'

Awe fell upon the people.

'Show him the dog,' said the tyrant with a dull shame upon his sullen face. There was silence, and on it the heavy breathing of the old man sounded like the breathing of an ox that has been struck with the pole-axe but not killed.

Then they brought the dog to his master. He was dead.

His eyes protruded, his mouth foamed, his body was swollen. Never more would Drummer sit on the sands by the river and watch the children play.

Gualdro stooped, looked, kissed the poor disfigured swollen body as he would have kissed a little dead child. Then he rose up, and with one mighty blow struck the tyrant who had killed his old comrade backward to the earth.

As he did so he laughed aloud.

'He fought the Austrians, he and I! We fought for Freedom!'

And with those words he choked, and dropped down dead, by the side of his dead dog.

The wise men who cut up dogs alive said he had died of heat apoplexy; the people of Pignone knew better than that. The poison-swelled body of Drummer was thrown out to swell a manure-heap; the body of his master was cast into the common death-ditch of the poor of the city. The bedridden wife died very soon; the little children, starving and miserable, were taken by people who had not bread enough to feed themselves. No one noticed, no one lamented; an old soldier and a dog were missed a little while by a few people from the sandy shore by the river, and one little child said often for a week, 'Why did not To-to come back? I gave my whole centime.' That was all.

The old hero had had his reward!

A Quiet Day in the Alps.¹

WE had only a week to spend in Switzerland. The weather had long been very bad. We could not try the high peaks—as *Dent Blanche*—that we most desired to achieve; and so we resolved one evening, which promised a fine day for the morrow, to walk up the Zmutt glacier and to visit the famed Stockje hut. This little walk may be worth its word of record.

The walk from Zermatt to the Stockje may be compassed, even with ladies, in five hours; while the return journey, which is mainly down-hill work, may be performed in an hour less. A very early start is, therefore, not necessary. If you get off by six, or even by seven o'clock, you can accomplish your purpose, allowing ample time for lunch at the hut, and for pauses of enjoyment on the way, and can yet be back at the Monte Rosa Hôtel in time for *table d'hôte*. It was a little after six o'clock on a fine morning in September that we started for a quiet day in the Alps. Last year (1878) fine days had been very rare in the Zermatt region. It was, in fact, the worst year known in the Alps since 1860; and yet there have been some bad years between the two dates. Very little was done in mountaineering in 1878. It was a barren year for climbers generally. When we arrived at Zermatt, Matterhorn had been ascended once; Weisshorn and Dent Blanche not at all; nor were they, I believe, afterwards climbed in 1878. Happily for us, we found for our little expedition a softly brilliant morning, which mellowed into a glorious day;—one of the few fine days of a disastrous year.

I have been very fortunate, during a rather long career of Alpine climbing, in friends and comrades. Memory fondly summons up, first, the figure—absent in 1878—of that dear friend and supreme mountaineer, Lyvetête; while other companions of the years of yore are recalled to thought as I gaze again on well-known, proudly conquered, unchanging peaks. One of the old friends, connected pleasantly with many a mountain

¹ 'For to myself mountains are the beginning and the end of all natural scenery; in them my affections are wholly bound. . . . To fill the thirst of the human heart for the beauty of God's working—to startle its lethargy with the deep and pure agitation of astonishment—are the higher missions of the mountains. It is impossible to examine in their connected system the features of even the most ordinary mountain scenery, without concluding that it has been prepared in order to unite as far as possible, and in the closest compass, every means of delighting and sanctifying the heart of man.'—RUSKIN.

reminiscence, survived into last year's brief tour, and went with me to the Stockje. He is a master of all classic lore, and fair old Winchester knows and loves him well. In the old day of gladness and of glee—concerning which he who lists to do so may consult 'Alpine Ascents and Adventures'—this particular friend had been christened 'M. D.'; and his diploma is still in force in intimate, affectionate intercourse. Few men that I know have a keener mental sympathy with all Switzerland, or a stronger delight in great or little walking, than the lovable M. D.

We had with us a gentleman and lady, friends of the M. D.; and we had a something between a porter and a guide, to show the way across the glacier and to carry provisions to the hut. This function was performed by the young giant Elias, who had been with me before, as porter, on one or two high expeditions, including a bivouac upon the Rothhorn. Our lady was mounted on a horse, and chatted with us from the serene but swaying elevation of a saddle.

The morning is fresh and fair. The sun is not yet high, and is, therefore, not yet hot;—but he will be both anon. We soon get clear of the picturesque outskirts of dear old Zermatt, and pass the last of the *Sennüthen*, or barns. As we pass by him we take the invariable and unavoidable glance at the wonder and the terror of the mystic Matterhorn. Peasant women, clad in faded, weather-stained, well-worn blue garments, toil along the stony path with great heaps of freshly-cut grass borne upon bent backs and bowed heads. On our left the rushing river rolls for ever its vexed, abounding tide. On little shallows of fine grey sand the turbid waters of the eddies lap and gurggle in gentle pulsations, while the main torrent hustles along upon its mad, wild way to the far Rhone and to the distant sea. We mount gently up a path of deep, sandy, dusty softness, which rises suavely until it runs high above the banks of raging Visp. The river will be fuller and fiercer far when the solving sun shall have melted the glaciers now tensely bound in the iron frost-bands of the cold, dark night. Below us, between path and stream, are pines—the eternal *sapin* of the Alps—some standing up so high that their feathery tops rise not above our busy feet; others, storm-smitten, broken from their rocky roothold, lie supine, stretched downwards in piteous ruin and in stranded wreck. On the opposite bank the pines stand up thickly in their chilly greenery. We approach the rude Matterhorn bridge, composed simply of rough logs laid across unshapen wooden supports. Beyond it the foaming river winds in a sharp sudden curve, and belts of pines close around and shut in the narrowed view. The mad, insensate river, hurrying desper-

ness of vegetation and the profusion of wild-flowers are extraordinary. Strewn about are giant boulders of dark rock, covered over with brown, or green, or yellow lichen and dark moss. It is so long since some huge stone-avalanche brought down these mighty lumps, that the moss upon them is thickly, softly dark as a mole's fur. As you look between leafy boughs to the opposite side of the profound torrent-valley you see that the bright sun is shining fiercely there. A range of high bare hills runs along with tolerably level sky-line across the chasm cleft between you and that long-stretching hill-ridge. Some of these bald hills are of the earth, earthy; and their down-streaming masses of loose soil only cohere in their position owing to the angles of the long slopes. They are of that colour which is the antithesis to true colour—clay; the meanest and most joyless of all hues or tones. Half-way up the heights opposite you see the little village of Zmutt, which is all but, but is yet not quite, black. The wooden houses look as if they had been burnt and charred by darkening fire, which had left shape and form intact. Many people would call these cots black; but they are in reality a very dark brown. From one point of the constantly winding picturesque way you look backwards, and there you see, blocking up the end of the long valley, and seeming near, though really far away, the bulks of Rympfischhorn and of Strahlhorn, their white, sharp snow-crests standing out clearly against the blue loveliness of the sunlit sky. You feel that snow-mountains, compared with earth-mountains, have the sculptor's ideal superiority of pure marble over common flesh. The greenery ends, the shadow ceases: you emerge from the soft coolness of leaf-shade.

You next reach the Staffel cow-huts, but smell no breath of kine, hear no music of their bells. Simple natures both, children of our great mother, M. D. and myself are passionately fond of milk, and we rushed at the huts with ardent longing. Alas! they were all shut up. It was September, and the cows had been driven down for the winter to Zermatt. Defrauded of our milk, we revenged ourselves by taking a pipe; which latter is, indeed, a good comforter under almost any disappointment. Here we waited for our friends—the lady had been long dismounted. The character of the scene now begins to undergo vital change. You are no longer sheltered or shut in. You are in the wide open, in glare of sun, in stir of dancing air. No idea of path more. The coarse, sometimes marshy grass swells up into rough mounds, like the 'grassy barrows of the happier dead.' Ahead, standing on the last slopes stretching down to the *moraine*, stand some dozen of lightning-scathed, blasted, withered pine-trees; resembling those gaunt, spectral trees Gustave Doré loves to draw for heightening the weird,

grotesque effect of infra-human desolation. Their white, broken-off, skeleton branches stand out piteously and yet demoniacally. These scarred, gnarled, dead trunks seem to be under a curse. The fierce lightning, after roaming vainly over the vague glacier, has struck spitefully at these unfortunately placed trees; which remain as victims of the electric fury. Below them stretches the long, dust-coloured moraine; beyond that spreads the wide glacier, lined with long smears of reddish-brown stone-heaps. The view before us now is broad, and white, and lofty. Greenery is to be exchanged for the world of ice and snow.

We descend upon a moraine, on which the usual *débris* matter is studded with large stones. It is rough walking. Here our lady is handed over to the special guidance and support of Elias, who points out to us, about to go on a-head, a series of cairns placed at intervals along the glacier in order to serve as landmarks to guides in case of mist. These cairns are not at first easily distinguishable from the many blocks of rock that strew the glacier; but a careful inspection soon shows the signal-stones that have been arranged by human forethought. Armed with this useful piece of knowledge, M. D. and myself find ourselves tramping merrily together, in advance of Elias and his sacred charge, along the rough *débris*-littered surface of the uneven glacier. Some sounds—as the clank of a soldier's sword and spur, the rustle of a lady's silken dress—are very suggestive; and we soon recognise the well-known sound of the nailed boots crunching over the frozen snow and the ring of the iron spikes of the ice-axes on *névé* and on stone. The surface is hard and in good order; and we stride along merrily and fast.

The hapless, love-crazed Gastibelza, *l'homme à la carabine*, sings that

Le vent qui vient à travers la montagne
Me rendra fou ;

and we feel a sort of fine madness, stirred by the merry wind that sweeps so coldly down the wide and white expanse of desolate and lonely glacier. The sun shines brightly; but we breast a strong, keen, tonic mountain wind; and we are exhilarated with its intoxicating life and force. We lean forward against the steady blast. We are inspired by its strength-giving virility, and the big boots trip over ridge and hollow as lightly as the fairy-like hoof of a little fawn.

Ahead stands the white *Dent d'Herens*, with its 12,000 soaring feet of sparkling, sun-kissed snows. Bright light glares on its huge blanched bulk; tenderest shadows—the shades of high

light on purest whiteness—relieve the blank of smoothness, and lend the grace of pattern to the nobleness of matchless forms. On our right, but as yet far ahead of us, is a massive bastion, or stone fort, rising from out the higher glacier. This is the Stockje; but we cannot see the hut. The three supreme objects in view—the Homer, Dante, Shakespeare—of our ocean of mountain glory are Matterhorn, Dent Blanche, Dent d'Herens. The latter is nearly straight ahead; it blocks up the view in front, as Strahlhorn and Rymfischhorn close it in behind. Dent Blanche is the supreme monarch of the range on our right; while, on the left, Matterhorn alone, stately but solitary, fills up the composition with his own giant image.

Neither of us had done Dent Blanche. Both wished to do it. I had once started for it, but the stern path was barred by shrieking storm-fiends. To-day the noble mountain would be quite impracticable, because the face—which has to be crossed near his top—is thickly covered with fatal snow. We look eagerly along his long ridge, and trace out the way to his lofty summit. We do not idealise this grand mountain the less because we have never stood upon his crest. Bachelors' wives are very ideal women!

The crystals on the glacier ridges sparkle in the sun as dancing wave-points do in a phosphorescent sea. The idea of distance up a rising waste of wide glacier expanse is very delusive; the Stockje long looks much nearer than it really is. As we approach it rises higher and higher out of the upward-tending, brown-streaked white expanse. The width of this broad glacier, from side to side, is very striking; and the sense of space, of silence, and of solitude deepens as we mount on our unresting way. Around and above us soar the grandeur and the grace of heroic summits. The day is full of health, the scenery is great in glory, and our minds are sublimated to a lofty joy.

Still we notice the difference between this simple walk and a really high and difficult climb. It is the difference between Minna and Brenda, in the 'Pirate.' We feel to-day nothing of tremulous eagerness, of anxiety, of strain. We have no feat to perform; no dangerous peak to conquer. We work in peace and at complete ease. We know no elevating excitement—but yet our sense of deep delight is very full.

And that terrible and beautiful Matterhorn! Is he more awful or more lovely? At his foot, or that base which is turned towards our glacier, is the unwrinkled, cool-shadowed snow-space on to which the shattered bodies of the victims of the first ascent fell. We know the spot well. Never do you look at Matterhorn without a gloomy thought of that most sad and fatal accident. M. D.

and myself have both stood upon his supreme and soaring crest; have both looked down his ghastly precipices, and have unveiled all his dæmonic secrets. We see him to-day from a side—the north-west—from which he is comparatively seldom seen. His sides differ widely in character; but from each this weird peak is superlatively superb. The Matterhorn looks most massive, but least terrible, from Breuil; from the Zmutt or from the Valpelline he is at his medium effect of greatness and of horror; but the finest view of him remains that one from Zermatt and the Gorner. Rock is his basis; snow is his accident. We fancy that we can trace out a way up him from this side—a side on which he has never yet been tried—but one place strikes us as being very doubtful and difficult; and having no glass with us, we cannot venture to decide even in theory whether the passage be practicable. And yet, seen from this side, the precipices of the Matterhorn are appalling, and his unscaled crags and walls are ghastly in their look of awful danger. Dent Blanche is very fine; but, when you turn your gaze to-day wholly to the left, and become absorbed in the mighty Matterhorn, you feel again that he is the unique and all-surpassing mountain of the Alps.

Beyond Matterhorn, between him and the Dent d'Herens, is the deeply-seamed, much-crevassed Tiefenmatten glacier, down which afternoon avalanches often descend in recklessly murderous play. Like many glaciers, Tiefenmatten looks, in the high light of such a day, as if his chasms and hollows were painted in pale Indian ink on a white paper. The opening above his low *col* is full of blue, sunny light.

The sun is hot, though the air is cool. The happy day is brilliant. As noon approaches, the sun moves to a point nearly above our heads; but the wind is less strenuous as the day culminates in the bright calm of sumptuous mid-day. What is that, to the right, lying upon the smooth sheet of the gleaming glacier? Our practised eyes detect something which is not rock or stone. We turn off towards it, and soon stand before the corpse of a young chamois. Some Arctic blast of recent severe storm must have whirled this hapless wanderer of the snows to this frozen death. The graceful creature—graceful even in piteous death—lay there stark and stiff; quite dead. The distended eyes were full and glassy; the mouth was opened wide. The poor beast—it was quite a young chamois—had perished miserably, exhausted by hopeless struggle with strain of storm, and wind, and mortal coldness. The fine legs were bent as if it had essayed desperately to rise before the last numbing chill paralysed the fight for the dear life. Never more would those delicate little hoofs spurn the snow, leap chasms, or bound securely from point to point of

dangerous rock. All its activity and beauty were rigid in this piteous form of death. We gazed sadly upon the forlorn victim of the victor Alps. We had so often seen others of his fleet race sweep across our path, or bound wonderfully above our heads; we had watched with such delight their agile motions, that we pitied deeply this youthful sacrifice to Alpine storm. With an involuntary sigh we turn away, and pass onward on our path, leaving the poor chamois extended rigidly upon his vast, magnificent, icy bier.

Now comes our goal. We stand at the foot of the great Stockje rock-mound. A stiffish but short rock-clamber brings us up to the level upon which the hut—one of the very best in all the Alps—stands. The first thing is lunch. The burden which Elias has borne so well is soon unpacked. We are hungry, and sit down gladly to tinned meats and glorious Swiss champagne. When Elias has finished his share he retires into the shade of the hut, and subsides into a profound porter's sleep. Scenery does not much interest him; but it has an unspeakable charm for us. The day is dazzling in its excess of brilliancy; the shining, sun-flooded heavens gleam upon the matchless chastity of cold, bleached snows. It is a burning wooing by the Sun-god of a pure white nymph. How grand this Alpine, semi-Arctic scene, with all objects so vast, and grand, and strange! We smoke the philosophic pipe of thoughtful joy; and, gazing intently and long upon the majestic mountainous white vision, we photograph the fair, rare scene upon receptive memories. All too soon—though we take a longish rest of pure delight—we start on our return journey, over the beautiful glacier, whose ugly name of Zmutt suggests *Schmutz*, and all unlovely things. As you descend the downward-sloping snow-field the whole aspect of the view is changed. We finish the icy snow and brown, rugged rocks; and then, looking backward, M. D. and I see little moving dots upon the wide waste behind. We wait for our companions; basking lazily, with another pipe, on soft, sun-warmed grass. Returning, we are on the right bank of the still tormented torrent.

Now, from the last height, we look down in the light of afternoon upon dear old Zermatt, with its metallic spire, with its white Hôtel, and its burnt-sienna *châlets*; and we enter, with the glad feeling of coming home, Monsieur and Madame Seiler's ever friendly Monte Rosa Hôtel. A bath, a change of dress, and *table d'hôte*.

But how changed Zermatt is from our experiences of earlier dates and better seasons! It is now September, and the season has been very bad. The Hôtel is not full, and there are few guests of the right sort in it. We are, I think, the only members of the

Alpine Club who are at Zermatt. The evenings are often rainy, and always very chilly. No row of guides and porters sits upon the low wall opposite the Monte Rosa. Of great guides poor Peter Knubel, who has lost all his brothers, is the only one there;—though we once saw great Jean Antoine Carrel. No merry groups sit, by softly bright lamps, outside the Hôtel after dinner. There is no gay talk, no silver murmur of ladies' laughter. No mountaineer returns from a great expedition, and above the acclaim of comrades feels his breast

Swell at the sweeter sound of woman's praise.

Let us leave the cheerless, desolate night outside, and go into the Hôtel.

The disastrous season of 1878 flowered into one good mountaineering feat. About the time—I think on the very day on which we walked to the Stockje—Mr. C. T. Dent, following in the wake of the great discoverers, of Leslie Stephen or of Whymper, made a great first ascent. He persevered, with determined pluck, after several failures, and succeeded in climbing the *Aiguille du Dru*, near Chamouni. The *Dru* is, compared to the *Aiguille Verte*, what one of the minor steeples of St. Paul's is when compared with the great dome; but the *Dru*, long unascended, was found to be a tough piece of rock-climbing, and is now an *Aiguille* conquered by the Alpine Club. The *Charmoz* and the *Dent du Géant* will follow.

Two nights after the Stockje day we were at Visp, on the homeward road. In a sky of violet-slate the moon was poised calmly on two outstretched pinions of pale, ruddy flame. An hour later, and the moon shone softly through a steadfast spread of fleecy, tender cloud. The sky was like a huge, heavenly glacier, turned downwards to the spectator. There were rifts and swellings, hollows of crevasses;—in short, there was a glacier in the sky, but it was all etherealised: the substance was of Iris' woof, unearthly in its tenderness, superhuman in its soft, ideal texture and sublimity of profound peace and remoteness. We still remember the rare loveliness of that Visp night.

That royal range of Alps is a mighty glacial barrier which divides the stern and noble North from sumptuous, sensuous, softer Italy. Those mountains fill the mountaineer with that awe which is mental reverence, while they inspire in his trained knowledge none of that fear which is mere physical dread. With how many images of nobleness and loveliness are they associated in the memory of the mountaineer! How well he knows snow-slopes, with snow hard or soft—hard in the coldness of early morning,

soft in the branding heat of the afternoon sun. I have never been exhausted at the end of the longest day of Alpine work, but I have been terribly tired when pounding for hours up a long, steep, soft snow-slope. Well also does the mountaineer know the glacier, with its seracs, with its crevasses, open or concealed; with its humps and hollows, with its murmur of sublatent runnels of impetuous water; well does he know the perilous hatchet-edge of the long, sharp *arête*; and best of all does he know the supreme summit, always rising above awful precipices, and never reached without a strange thrill of triumph!

He remembers the delicate witchery of many a line of light and shade; the thick, pale air opaquely blanched by the wild storm-whirl of madly dancing snow-flakes; the silvery mist creeping like a thin veil of subtlest film over the brown hue and bulk of massive rocks. He knows the Alps in sunshine and in tempest: he knows them intimately in all their phases of vastness, of terror, of grandeur, and of awe. A thousand memories of the secret, sacred, silent solitudes of the giant hills, of days on which strong labour overcame difficulties, and clear will surmounted dangers, until he stood in glory and in joy upon the loftiest crest of the proudest peak, are stirred in the mountaineer when he comes into any contact with the Alps.

H. SCHÜTZ WILSON.

Under the Guns.

UNDER the guns of the Fort on the Hill
 Daisies are blossoming, buttercups fill ;
 Up the grey ramparts the scaling vine flings
 High its green ladders, and falters and clings

Under the guns,

Under the guns,

Under the guns of the Fort on the Hill.

Under the guns of the Fort on the Hill
 Once shook the earth with the cannonade's thrill,
 Once trod these buttercups feet that, now still,
 Lie all at rest in their trench by the mill.

Under the guns,

Under the guns,

Under the guns of the Fort on the Hill.

Under the guns of the Fort on the Hill
 Equal the rain falls on good and on ill,
 Soft lies the sunshine, still the brook runs,
 Still toils the husbandman—under the guns,

Under the guns,

Under the guns,

Under the guns of the Fort on the Hill.

Under the guns of Thy Fort on the Hill
 Lord ! in Thy mercy we wait on Thy will :
 Lord, is it War that Thy wisdom best knows,
 Lord, is it Peace, that Thy goodness still shows

Under the guns,

Under the guns,

Under the guns of Thy Fort on the Hill !

BRET HARTE.

Mechanical Chess-Players.

BY RICHARD A. PROCTOR.

It is a singular and not altogether pleasing circumstance, that whereas the advent of De Kempelen's so-called automaton chess-player was hailed in almost every European capital with unbounded plaudits, the far more ingenious and, to speak the truth, the far more honest mechanical chess-player which has been recently exhibited at the Aquarium, and is now playing excellent chess at No. 9 Strand, has received far less attention than it deserves. It would seem, indeed, from the praises accorded to Mephisto, as well as the criticisms passed upon his supposed deficiencies, that the true character of this mechanical chess-player has not been rightly apprehended by most of those who have expressed their opinions respecting his performances. It is especially to be noted that in two important respects Mephisto has the advantage of De Kempelen's chess-player. In the first place, Mephisto really is what the gentleman who has 'raised' him (the expression may be understood at the reader's pleasure) asserts him to be, De Kempelen's chess-player most assuredly was not; and secondly, there was a concealed player in the supposed automatic structure (including figure, seat, table, and chest) which De Kempelen exhibited, whereas it is certain that there is no such player in either the figure, the seat, the table, or the chess-board (there is no chest) constituting the *tout-ensemble* of the display in the case of M. Gumpel's Mephisto. Add to this that in a mechanical sense the movements of Mephisto are simply perfect, while his play is of a very high class indeed, and it will be judged that he fairly deserves something like the enthusiastic recognition which was undeservedly accorded to De Kempelen's so-called automaton.

The history of De Kempelen's figure is so curious, and illustrates so well the points to which I now chiefly desire to draw attention, that it will be well to give a brief sketch of it in this place, the more so that, as I believe, few of the present generation have read the accounts which, half a century or so ago, were given in several publications, respecting that clever deception.

In the year 1769, De Kempelen, a Hungarian gentleman then well known for his skill and ingenuity in mechanical matters, was invited by the Empress Maria Theresa to witness some magnetic experiments exhibited at the Imperial Court by M. Pelletier, a

Frenchman. During the exhibition he casually mentioned that he thought he could exhibit far greater wonders than Pelletier had displayed. The Empress, a rather cleverer woman than most of her class, obtained a promise from De Kempelen that he would give an early proof that his boast was not an idle one. He kept his word with her, appearing at Vienna in the next year with his Automaton chess-player. De Windisch, one of those who saw the figure as thus first exhibited,—for afterwards it was in some noteworthy respects altered,—gives the following account of it:—¹

‘I saw the inventor draw from a recess his automaton, fixed to a good-sized chest, and I could not, any more than others, help suspecting that this chest might contain a child, which, as I guessed from the dimensions of the case, might be ten or twelve years of age. But we were all confounded on seeing De Kempelen turn up the garments of the automaton, pull forth the drawer, and open all the doors of the chest. Moving it about, thus opened by means of the castors on which it is placed, he turned it in all directions, and permitted us freely to examine it all over.’

Here follows a long account of his own and the spectators’ bewilderment, which might all, save one episode, be included in the simple statement that they were thoroughly mystified. The exception is the case of one old lady, who ‘crossed herself with a devout sigh,’ and then ‘hid herself in a distant window, that she might no longer remain in a proximity so dangerous as that existing between herself and the demon she now fully believed must occupy the automaton.’

The chest to which the figure was affixed is $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet long, 2 feet wide, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet high; and was, by means of castors, moved easily from place to place. Behind it was a figure the size of life, dressed in Turkish costume, seated upon a wooden chair, fastened to the body of the automaton.

The figure ‘leans its right arm on the table, holding a long Turkish pipe in the left hand in the attitude of a person who ceases to smoke. It plays with its left hand,’—an oversight not discovered till the work was too far advanced for a change to be made. When the Turk is about to play, M. De Kempelen takes the pipe from its hand. Before the automaton is a chess-board, screwed to the table, or upper surface of the chest, on which the eyes of the figure appear to be constantly fixed. M. De Kempelen opens the first door of the chest, and pulls out the drawer which is underneath. The chest is partitioned off into two equal parts, of

¹ I have considerably abridged his very wordy account, which in full would occupy seven or eight pages of this magazine, and yet convey no more real information than *he above abridgment*.

which the left is narrower than the right. The left side, indeed, occupies scarcely one half of the length of the chest, and is filled with wheels, levers, cylinders, and other pieces of clockwork. In the division to the right are seen some wheels, some spring barrels, and a couple of horizontal quadrants. The remainder is filled with a carpet, a cushion, and a small board, on which are traced certain letters in gold. At a subsequent point of time, and prior to the automaton's commencing play, the inventor takes out this casket, and places it on a side table. He does the same by the board of letters, which is finally placed on the chess-board after the game is played, to enable the automaton by these means to answer questions to be put to him.' In the drawer of the chest are chessmen, and also a small box containing six small chess-boards presenting an ending of a game. These positions could be set up on the figure's own board, and he undertook (or M. De Kempelen undertook for him) to win each and every such game by force, whether playing with the red or white,—a poor device, seeing that hundreds of such positions have been devised which an average player could retain in his memory, winning mechanically whether he took one side or the other.

Now follows an important part of Windisch's description,—important, at least, as showing how thoroughly he and others were deceived by De Kempelen's ingenious devices. 'M. De Kempelen,' he says, 'not only opens the front door of the chest, but also those behind; by which means all the wheels are clearly seen, so as to give the most perfect conviction that no living being could be hidden therein. To render this *exposé* more complete' (as Windisch supposed, but in reality for a quite different purpose) the constructor places a lighted paper in the interior of the chest, thus throwing light into its remotest corners. Finally he lifts the robe of the automaton, and throws it over his (the figure's) head, in such a manner as completely to shew the structure of the interior, where also are seen only wheels and levers, which so entirely occupy the body of the automaton that room is not left to hide even a cat. The very trousers of the Turk are furnished with a small door, likewise flung open, to remove the slightest shadow of a doubt. But do not imagine, good reader, that the inventor shuts one door as he opens another. *The entire automaton is seen at the same time uncovered, the garments being also turned up, and the draw opened as well as all the drawers of the chest.* In fact, it is in this state he rolls it from place to place around the room, courting the inspection of the curious.'

All this, in reality, was done to throw dust in the eyes of the 'curious;' for, as will presently be explained, the interior was not

all shown at once, as it seemed to be. To proceed, however, with Windisch's description: M. De Kempelen then 'shuts all the doors of the chest, and places it behind a balustrade, made to prevent spectators from shaking the machine, and also to keep clear for the inventor a rather spacious place, in which he occasionally walks, approaching the chest at times on the right or left side, but without touching it until it is time to wind up the springs.' . . . M. De Kempelen places the casket on a little table near the machine; and the inventor 'has frequent recourse to the casket' during the play, looking at the inside which is kept hidden from the spectators. 'It is generally assumed,' says Windisch with charming *naïveté*, 'that the casket is simply a device to attract attention; still, M. de Kempelen assures his visitors that without it the automaton could not play.'

The automaton when about to move 'slowly raises his arm and directs it towards the piece he intends to play. He suspends his hand over the piece, spreads his fingers to grasp it, places it in its destined situation, draws back his arm and again rests it on the cushion.' . . . At each move he makes, a slow sound of wheels and clock-work is heard. The noise ceases when the move is made. The automaton always claims the first move. When his adversary plays, the figure lifts his head and overlooks the board. He courteously warns the queen of being attacked by bowing his head twice; and equally notifies such to the king by three bows. Should a false move be played, he indignantly shakes his head; but not confining himself to tacit disapprobation, he instantly confiscates the offending piece, following up the capture by playing himself—thus depriving his opponent not only of his piece, but of his move also. This *divertissement* happens not unfrequently; spectators wishing to test the figure's powers of discrimination. Of course the figure here departed from the laws of chess, which inflict no severer punishment on a false move than that the opponent may either let the move stand, insist on the piece falsely moved making a correct move, or else that the player who has moved a piece falsely, shall replace it and move his king.

'To destroy the impression that magnetism is the principle of action, M. De Kempelen permits the most powerful magnet to be placed on the machine.'

The figure played good chess. The account shows clearly that it was not in communication with either of the adjoining rooms, the ceiling, or the floor; all parts of the interior of the machine seemed to have been so thoroughly shown, at one and the same moment, to the spectators, that no human figure could possibly have been concealed therein. Thus the opinion was adopted

of not a few that the figure really was what it purported to be, a true automaton, that is, 'a machine made by human hands, performing all its movements by the action of various springs, wheels, and other mechanical forms of power, and by these only.' In other words, it was assumed by those who adopted this opinion, that De Kempelen had so arranged matters that for every possible position which the chessmen might assume upon the board, the internal machinery would so act as to cause the figure to make—I will not say the best possible move for that position, seeing that in that case it could never have been beaten—but a good move. In my paper on 'Automatic Chess and Card Playing' ('Science Byways,') I have shown that, while it is theoretically possible to construct such an automaton, it is practically impossible to do so,—and would be, even if the whole human race could for thousands of years devote their energies to that one purpose. The same point has been put very clearly in a somewhat different manner by the constructor of Mephisto,—who (M. Gumpel, not Mephisto) describes the figure, be it remembered, not as an automaton, but simply as a mechanical chess-player. 'The chessmen,' he says, 'though thirty-two in number, may for simplicity's sake be reduced to twelve, (viz. King, Queen, Rook, Knight, Bishop, and one pawn of each colour, leaving the other pawns out of the question), while one of these 12 pieces stands on No. 1 square, either one of the other eleven may stand on No. 2 square, so that we can make 11 changes on No. 2 square, for each piece placed on No. 1; or for easier calculation let it be 10 changes; hence on the two squares we can ring 10×10 or 100 changes. We have on the chess-board 64 squares; since, however, the kings can never stand on adjacent squares, and as a king cannot be in check by more than one piece at a time, &c. &c.' (these &c.'s refer to the limitations on the possible positions of pawns), 'we shall have to reduce the number of squares to, be it, one half, 32.' (This is a very generous reduction, be it noticed, the limitations being in reality few compared with the total number of positions possible.) 'To obtain the number of combinations which can be formed by the chessmen on these 32 squares, we have to multiply the number 10 by itself 31 times, and the result would be given by writing 32 noughts after 1 (100,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000). Similar combinations may happen at different times in different parts of the board; still, provision must be made for the arm to make the required moves on either part; the same combination of pieces on the board, shifted only one square, requires in the special mechanism a special arrangement for such altered position; so that the above

number of possible combinations for which the mechanism must be constructed is certainly not too high. The assumption that the number of openings is limited, and that the machinery can be set for the best moves, is very easily upset by a tyro putting his queen *en prise*, to say nothing of a false move; and unless an automaton could take advantage of the first and correct the latter, the game would soon arrive at a chaotic state.'

When these results, which, be it remembered, fall short of the truth, are taken into account, we can readily calculate the time and labour required for constructing such an automaton. The mechanism, as M. Gümpel says, 'may be compared with a jacquard loom, in the cards of which (in this instance of metal) one hole is to be marked and drilled, for each possible position of the men on the board. Let a workman mark and drill 1,200 holes per hour—12,000 per day of 10 hours; let him work 300 days in the year, and 50 years of his life, drilling 180, or in round numbers 200 millions of holes during this period, then we should have to write 23 noughts after 5 (500,000,000,000,000,000,000) to obtain the number of workmen, whose lives' labour would be absorbed in marking and drilling the number of holes required to meet the above combinations.' Or we may put the matter in this way. At any given moment there are not above 1,500 millions of human beings in the world, say 250 millions of persons capable of carrying on the work of drilling holes in the manner required. Then adopting M. Gümpel's numbers, which are very moderate, it will be found that all such persons living on the globe at any one time, would have to be at work during 100,000,000,000,000,000 years to drill the necessary number of holes in the metal plates. But as the plates would have in the first instance to be made, and as they would have to be all properly adjusted and placed in connection with the automaton figure and his chess-board—they would, by the way, at a very moderate computation, require a space about a million times larger than the whole of the space within the glass walls of the Crystal Palace—it will, I think, become tolerably clear that no truly automaton chess-player will ever be constructed. It will at least be admitted, I conceive, that De Kempelen, during the year which elapsed between his promise to Maria Theresa, and the exhibition of his so-called automaton, had not accomplished precisely all that was requisite to make a true automaton player.

Under all the circumstances, and especially when we remember that he did not contradict statements implying that his chess-player was truly automatic, we may as well give De Kempelen all *the credit which he deserves* for refusing the offer of large sums of

money from persons who wished to purchase the automaton for speculative purposes. 'For a long time,' says Mr. Walker, 'his nice sense of honour' (about which there may be some slight question, perhaps) 'prevented him from stooping to coin cash from metal so intrinsically base as he felt the ore in question really to be.' Which is very much as though one should say that a man was too honourable to accept a post of trust for which he felt himself utterly unworthy because intrinsically dishonest. However, be this as it may, De Kempelen took his automaton to pieces, stowed it away, and gave out (untruly, but that is a detail) that it had been hopelessly damaged by repeated removals.

Time passed, and the automaton was almost forgotten, when the Grand Duke Paul of Russia paid a visit with his wife to the Emperor Joseph II. of Austria. After the first round of entertainments had passed, and when something still seemed necessary to the amusement of his guest, Joseph bethought himself of De Kempelen's automaton. He sent to the mechanician, asking him to put the figure into working order. In five weeks' time the obsequious De Kempelen, always ready to oblige great folks, had furnished up his automaton. 'As before, its success was complete; the Grand Duke and his spouse, as well as the Emperor Joseph, were equally delighted and astonished by its feats.' De Kempelen was handsomely rewarded, and being urged to reconsider his determination not to make money out of his cleverly deceptive figure, he condescended to put aside what our biographer calls his false delicacy, and prepared to lie abroad for the good of his pocket.

In 1783 De Kempelen went to Paris, where, however, the automaton was most wofully beaten by the French chess-players at the Café de la Régence. 'It is worthy of mention,' says Walker, 'that De Kempelen himself was very inferior to his automaton as a chess-man' (meaning presumably as a chess-player), 'since in playing in the ordinary manner a first-rate practitioner could give him the rook; but there was much less difference between the best flesh-and-blood players and their wooden opponent.'

De Kempelen, well satisfied with the success of his speculation in Paris, proceeded next across the straits with his automaton. At that time Philidor, the renowned French player, had been for some time resident in London. He does not appear to have played himself with the automaton. But he had formed a school of chess here 'of greater extent,' Mr. Walker states, 'than was ever seen before or after. To this cause may be attributed,' Mr. Walker proceeds, 'the high fee of admission to a sight of our automaton, fixed by M. de Kempelen at five shillings! Hundreds and thou-

sands of persons flocked to the show.' An improvement had been made, by the way, in the mechanical part of the figure, which now actually pronounced the word *check* or *échec*, or something like one or other sound, according perhaps to the fancy of the auditor.

A Mr. Thicknesse, however, denounced the whole affair. He seems to have had rather a fancy for such denunciations. 'Forty years since,' he wrote in 1785, 'I found three hundred people assembled to see, at a shilling each, a coach go without horses, moved by a man within side of a wheel, ten feet in diameter, just as the crane wheel raises goods from ships on a quay. Mr. Quin, the Duke of Athol, and many persons present, were angry with me for saying it was trod round by a man within the hoop or hinder wheel, but a small paper of snuff put into the wheel soon convinced all round that it could not only move, but sneeze too, like a Christian.' M. De Kempelen would probably have objected to the introduction of an ounce or two of snuff into the machinery of his automaton, though, as we shall see presently, a device somewhat like Thicknesse's was afterwards applied successfully to the chess-player. Mr. Thicknesse showed that a man might be concealed within the chest or the figure. 'I saw,' he says, 'the ermine trimmings of the Turk's outer garment move once or twice, when the figure should have been quite motionless, and that a confederate is concealed is past all doubt; for they only exhibit the automaton from one to two o'clock, because the invisible player could not bear a longer confinement, for if he could, it cannot be supposed that they would refuse to receive crowns for admittance from 12 o'clock to 4 instead of from 1 to 2.' Mephisto, by the way, is prepared to meet all comers from 2 to 10. I have been present for the whole interval, and during the whole time he was not for five minutes together without an antagonist. If I remember rightly, he played on that occasion thirty-two games, winning all save one (which I won myself, but only through an oversight on Mephisto's part, and it was but one out of eight I played that day) and drawing two others. On the same day he played with one of our strongest amateurs a most interesting game, since I believe published, in which one of the most beautiful combinations I have ever seen (in quick play) was rapidly wrought out.¹

Mr. Thicknesse was doubtless near the truth; but as he used

¹ Two circumstances, telling in different directions, must be remembered in considering Mephisto's play. The first is, that the concealed player is considerably handicapped by the conditions under which he plays, even at the beginning of his long day's spell of play; the second is, that players who meet him are expected to move without any prolonged study of the position, and they are naturally less prepared to play what has been called a 'skittling game,' than he (*i.e.* the concealed player), with his long practice, has necessarily become.

denunciation rather than argument, he received very little attention.

Now occurred a singular episode in the career of the automaton. Hitherto the secret of the figure had lain between De Kempelen and those whom he employed to work the mechanism. But De Kempelen was at this time persuaded to reveal the secrets of the prison-house to about the last man in all Europe whom, had he been wise, he should have selected for a confidant—Frederick (called the Great) of Prussia. Frederick was a lover of chess, but, like Napoleon (who also subsequently met and was beaten by the automaton), he was by no means a strong player. Defeated by the figure, he became the more eager to know how the deception was managed. For a large sum De Kempelen agreed to solve the riddle. Frederick was thoroughly mortified by the disclosure. He did not reveal the secret; but he did worse, he showed and expressed such utter contempt, that the automaton no longer attracted attention. It was thrown aside into an obscure lumber-room, where it remained till a new generation was ready to be duped afresh by it.

Cast aside because of the contempt of one fighting prince, the automaton was recalled to notice by another. When Napoleon came to Berlin, the figure was furbished up again for his entertainment. He played against it in person. 'The contest,' says Walker, 'was marked by an interesting circumstance. Half-a-dozen moves had barely been played, when Bonaparte, purposely to test the powers of the machine, committed a false move; the automaton bowed, replaced the offending piece, and motioned to Napoleon that he should move correctly. Highly amused, after a few minutes the French chief again played an illegal move. This time the automaton without hesitation snatched off the piece which had moved falsely, confiscated it, and made his own move. Bonaparte laughed; and for the third time, as if to put the patience of his antagonist to a severe trial, played a false move. The automaton raised his arm, swept the whole of the pieces off the board, and declined continuing the game.'

When Eugène Beauharnais was King of Bavaria, the automaton, then in the possession of M. Maelzel, was exhibited successfully before him. Eugène offered 1,200*l.* for the figure and its key. The offer was accepted; the courtiers were sent from the room; 'the door was locked by Eugène, and every precaution taken to ensure his acquiring the sole knowledge of the enigma. The prince is alone with the demonstrator; the latter, unhesitatingly and in silence, flings open simultaneously all the doors of the chest, and Prince Eugène saw—what he saw! Blue Beard's wife at the door

of the azure chamber, looked not more blue than did Bavaria's monarch; but Eugène faced the *dénouement* with greater wisdom than the former royal purchaser of the secret. He shrugged up his shoulders, took a pinch of snuff, laughed at the joke, and, though he probably thought his purchase *rather dear at the price*, expressed much gratification at inspecting the figure in all its parts. He even subsequently placed himself in the necessary relation with the automaton, and giving it the invisible impulse, conducted it during several games against some of his most intimate friends.*

The automaton quickly passed again into Maelzel's hands. It was exhibited in Paris, M. Boncourt, a very strong player, conducting the figure's chess. In 1819, it was exhibited a second time in London. M. Maelzel engaged the assistance of Mr. Lewis, an excellent chess-player, who conducted the automaton chess for something like a twelvemonth. After this M. Mouret, one of the best French players of the school of Deschapelles, took charge of the figure's play. The automaton (to use the incorrect name by which the figure was at this time constantly designated) now undertook to give the odds of pawn and move to all comers—in other words, his king's bishop's pawn was removed from the board and his opponent took first move. There was as much prudence as caution in this arrangement. Many players who could have conducted a tolerably strong game against Mouret, playing even, would find themselves at a disadvantage in playing the odds-game against him. To him all the resources of this game would be known, to nine-tenths of his opponents the just manner of conducting it would be unknown. Unquestionably with even players the odds of the pawn and move are considerable. But the removal of the king's pawn is not an unalloyed loss to the giver of odds. So soon as he has castled on the king's side, his rook has strong rule over the king's bishop's file, ordinarily impeded (so far as the rook's range is concerned), by his own pawn on that file. Indeed, in the best known of all the gambits, this pawn is sacrificed chiefly with the object of getting command of the file in question. The sacrifice requires a move, which is saved when the pawn is given; and though some collateral advantages of sacrificing the pawn are not gained when the pawn is given, yet the player who constantly gives the pawn gains much by constant practice in the same line of play, at any rate as against players of less experience in the same game.¹ Mouret hardly lost one game in a hundred at these

* A good story was told at Mephisto's table in illustration of the disadvantage of attempting odds against a player familiar with games at odds. Such a player offered an opponent of considerable strength, but of less experience, the odds of the four first moves (to be taken within his own half of the board, as otherwise the familiar



odds. He numbered among his opponents such skilful players as Brand, Cochrane, Keen, and Mercier.

An Oxford graduate at this time, 1819, tried to solve the problem of the automaton's play, but failed to give any satisfactory explanation. Willis, of Cambridge, was more successful. He showed first that certain features in the exhibition clearly indicated that the mechanism supposed to be wound up from time to time had in reality nothing to do with the figure's play. The exhibitor would seem to have been singularly careless in this matter. Although, as Willis truly said, every train of mechanism which has to be wound up, must perform a certain definite amount of work for each turn of the key, the number of turns being also necessarily limited, the key was often turned the same number of times after the figure had played a game of nine or ten moves, as after it had fought out a contest of 70 or 80 moves; nay, sometimes the key was wound through the full number of revolutions when the figure had not even made a single move since the last winding. This clearly showed that, as Mr. Willis expresses it, 'the revolving axis was unconnected with machinery; except, perhaps, a ratchet wheel and click, or some similar apparatus, to enable it to produce the necessary sounds; and consequently that the key, like that of a child's watch, might be turned whenever the purposes of the exhibition seemed to require it.' Then he proved by figures and drawings, that a man might be concealed in the chest, shifting his position several times while the different parts of the apparatus were exposed successively to view. He showed also that when play was in progress, the concealed player might take up such a position as to overlook the board through the stuff waistcoat of the figure. This, as Walker points out, is something like Thicknesse's view; but it was 'now beautifully and exactly made out, even to demonstration, by the aid of a skilful draughtsman and mechanist.' Brewster, in his clever work on natural magic, copied Willis's account. Neither he nor Willis, however, seems, says Walker, 'to have taken into consideration the almost utter impos-

scholar's mate could be given in the four moves). They played two games at these odds. In the first, the taker of the odds played out his king's and queen's pawns two squares each, and his two knights to king's and queen's bishop's third square—having thus at the start a splendid opening. But he lost the game, his opponent's superior experience in odds games enabling him to take advantage of every flaw in the continuation of the attack. In the second game the taker of odds moved out his king's knight as his first move, his queen's knight as his second, then moved back his king's knight as his third move, and his queen's knight as his fourth move, leaving the board as it stood at the beginning, and the first move to his opponent. This game, in which he had no odds, and even the disadvantage (as far as it is such) of the second move, he won. *The fact is, he was on familiar ground, whereas in taking the odds he was all at sea.*

sibility of the concealed man's being impervious to detection, with merely a veil between him and the public: the least sound or motion would, in such case, destroy the illusion, and his very breathing would infallibly lead to ultimate exposure.' It must not be overlooked, however, that in the Crystal Palace automaton (now at the Aquarium) this is actually the way in which the concealed player was conducting the automaton's chess. It is in reality quite possible so to arrange matters that the concealed player's eyes may be screened from public view while they are directed on the board. Suppose, for instance, that when the doors are closed, a tube is brought into such a position that looking through it one of the player's eyes can see the whole board but no more, then it is certain that no one can see that eye (the other would of course be quite concealed) without placing his head between the chess-board and the concealed tube. It is unlikely that a spectator would ask to be permitted to do this; and if permission were asked, the exhibitor could find many plausible reasons for declining to give it.

And now to give the explanation published in the '*French Penny Magazine*,' and afterwards in abstract in the '*Palamède*,' after Mouret had sold the secret to the publishers of the former journal.

The man who played was concealed in the chest. 'He sat on a low species of stool, moving on castors, and had every facility afforded him for changing and shifting his position like an eel. While one part of the machine was shown to the public he took refuge in another; now lying down, now kneeling; placing his body in all sorts of positions studied beforehand, and all assumed in regular rotation, like the A, B, C of a catechism. The interior pieces of clockwork—the wheels and make-weight apparatus—were all equally movable; and additional assistance was thus yielded to the fraud. Even the trunk of the automaton was used as a hiding-place, in its turn, for part of the player's body. A very short amount of practice, by way of rehearsal, was found sufficient to meet the purposes of the occasion; and one regular order being observed by the two confederates as to opening the machine, a mistake rarely or never occurred. Should anything go radically wrong, the prisoner had the means of telegraphing his gaoler, and the performance could be suspended.' Those who supposed that they had seen the whole of the interior at one view were simply deceived by devices in which, in reality, consisted the cleverness of the whole affair. 'Certain doors dropped and closed of themselves, with spring locks; others were opened in their places. The machine was turned round, but still was never wholly exposed to view at once. It becomes perfectly ludicrous,' says Mr. Walker, 'to read over again Windisch's glowing description of the miraculous

monster, when we find that even a reference to his own drawings shows that at the time he says all the doors were open, two were closed.'

The lighted candle introduced into the interior when there was nothing to be seen, was purposely left burning close by, in order that no ray of light might flash out from the interior, where a second candle was necessarily burning during the play. For, as has been already stated, the director of the automaton was in the chest, not overlooking the board as Thicknesse and Willis supposed.

Now follows a part of the statement which has been called in question by some, to whom Willis's explanation seems more satisfactory. We can understand how a player concealed within the chest could cause the arm of the figure to move in such a way as might be required, or could make the figure nod its head, say 'check,' and so forth; but it is not very easy to understand how any chess-player could conduct a game with reasonable rapidity under the conditions now to be described. We are told that the concealed player had a board with men which he could peg into it, as in the ordinary 'travelling chess-board.' On this board, 'he repeated the move played by the antagonist of the automaton, and on this he concocted his scheme of action, and made his answer, before playing it on the automaton's board through the agency of Mr. Wood's digits.' (This is apparently meant for a joke). 'A third chess-board, blank, with the squares numbered according to the usual mode of chess notation, was fixed, as it were, in the ceiling of the interior; thus forming the reverse of the table on which the automaton really appeared to play. Now, the men with which the automaton conducted his game were all duly magnetised at the foot; and the move being made above, the magnets on the pieces moved, set in motion certain knobs or metallic indices, adapted to each square of the board on the reverse; and thus was the requisite knowledge of the move played communicated to Jack in the Box. . . . The real Simon Pure' (Mr. Walker must jest or die), 'shut up in his cell, saw by the light of his taper the metallic knobs or indices above, vibrating so as to mark the move just played. He repeated this move on his own little board, calculated his answering *coup*, and guided the automaton's figures in order to its being duly performed. The happy association of magnetism with the figure, thus hit upon by De Kempelen, was probably suggested to him by the magnetic experiments of Pelletier at the court of the Empress.'

It has been objected to this explanation (by no less an authority than M. Gumpel, the inventor of the present far more ingenious mechanical chess-player) that in the first place magnetism could hardly do what was (according to this account) required from it,

and that in the second place the process described would take too much time. It must not be forgotten, however, that the explanation came from persons who had seen all the interior of the figure, and had followed all the workings of the mechanism, having paid somewhat heavily for the privilege, and having certainly no interest in giving an untrue account of the matter. Moreover, M. Alexandre, who himself for a time conducted the automaton's play, gave a similar account of the interior arrangements. Professor Tomlinson, who adopts the explanation given in '*Le Palamède*,' had abundant opportunities of ascertaining, in personal intercourse with Alexandre and others who had conducted the automaton's play, the correctness of that explanation. I think, too, that one difficulty mentioned by M. Gümpel indicates rather an omission in the explanation than any real objection. He says that to see the board placed over his head the observer would have to assume a very inconvenient position, one quite incompatible, one would suppose, with the continuance of good chess-play for any length of time. But nothing would have been easier than so to arrange matters that the concealed player could see, side by side with the small board on which he worked, a reflected image of the inverted board with the knobs worked by the magnetic chess-men above. In that case very little practice would be required to move a man on this board almost simultaneously with the indication of the knobs or suspended balls attracted by the magnets; there would thus be practically no loss of time whatever.

Before passing on to consider the far superior claims of Mephisto to public attention, I may quote here two stories from M. de Tournay's amusing article in '*Le Palamède*.' It happened that on one occasion, when the automaton was at Amsterdam, M. Maelzel was more than a year in arrears with M. Mouret's salary. 'The King of Holland sent one morning to engage the exhibition room, at the same time ordering a sum equal to 3,000 francs to be paid to M. Maelzel. The latter went joyfully to announce the good news to his associate; they breakfasted together, and were delighted with the thought of entering the lists with a crowned head. M. Maelzel then hastened to make such preparation as should make the exhibition as brilliant as possible. The performance was to commence at half-past twelve (afternoon). Twelve o'clock arrives, and it is time for M. Mouret to take his station in the chest. But he has not yet arrived, and M. Maelzel hastens to find out the cause of the delay. What is his surprise to find Mouret in bed, and seized with a convulsive trembling. "What do I see? What is the matter?" exclaimed Maelzel. "I have a fever," said his artful assistant. "Why, you were very well

just now!" "Yes, but this is a sudden attack." "The king will be here presently." "He must go back again." "But what can I say to him?" "Tell him the automaton has got the fever." "No more of this folly." "I don't wish to joke with you." "Then get up." "Impossible." "Let me call a physician." "It is of no use." "Is there no means of subduing this fever?" "Yes, one only." "What is it?" "To pay me the 1,500 francs you owe me." "You shall have them—this evening." "No, no; this moment." Maelzel saw too plainly that there was no alternative, and went to fetch the money. The cure was wonderful; the automaton was never so attractive before. The king did not actually play, but he advised his Minister of War, who played for him. The pair were completely beaten by the automaton, but all the blame of the defeat was of course thrown upon the minister.'

The other anecdote relates to one of those foolish practical jokes by which life has very often been endangered, though this case is rather worse than others of the kind because the person who played the joke was personally interested in the result. 'In one of the towns of Germany a conjuror had been exhibiting his various tricks to the delight and amazement of the inhabitants, when the arrival of the automaton presented a still more powerful object of attraction, and left the poor fellow without an audience. Annoyed and jealous at the reputation of his rival, he went to be himself a witness of the new performance, and from his own experience in the art of deception he felt convinced that the chest contained a hidden player. He therefore began all at once to raise a cry of "Fire," in which he was seconded by one or two companions. The spectators were seized with the greatest alarm, in which, strange to say, the automaton participated, and in his flight upset his adversary, and tottered about as if he were mad. Happily, M. Maelzel, who preserved his presence of mind, was able to push him behind a curtain, where he soon became quiet and recovered his usual dignified bearing. The alarm of fire was soon discovered to be false, and the conjuror did not gain anything by his attempt to undeceive the company' (at the risk of their lives, it should be added; one wishes it could have been added that he had gained a sound thrashing). 'After this event, M. Maelzel, in giving directions to a candidate for the office of concealed player, was accustomed to say, "If you hear a cry of fire, don't stir; I will come to your help."'

The automaton was afterwards exhibited in the principal towns of the United States and Canada. It was eventually deposited in a lumber-room in Philadelphia, where it remained until some twenty

years ago, when the lumber-room and its contents were destroyed by fire. Of this tragic event, a writer in the 'Chess World,' who was present, gives the following lively account: 'It was in Philadelphia, on the night of July 5, 1854, about half-past ten o'clock. The east roof of the National Theatre was a mass of whirling flames, the front of the Girard House was on fire. A dozen dwellings were blazing fiercely, and the smoke and flames were already curling in eddies about the roof and through the windows of the well-known Chinese Museum. At the east end of this building, nearest to the fire, our friend had dwelt for many years. Struggling through the dense crowd, we entered the lower hall, and, passing to the far end, reached the foot of a small back staircase. The landing above us was concealed by a curtain of thick smoke, now and then alive, as it were, with quick tongues of writhing flame. To ascend was impossible; already the fire was about him. Death found him tranquil. He, who had seen Moscow perish, knew no fear of fire. We listened with painful anxiety. It might have been a sound from the crackling wood-work, or the breaking window-panes, but certain it is that we heard through the struggling flames, and above the din of outside thousands, the last syllables of our departed friend, the sternly whispered oft-repeated syllables, *échec, échec!*'

I have already noticed the first and in reality the most important circumstance in which the exhibition of Mephisto differs from that of M. De Kempelen's figure. Mephisto is described as a mechanical chess-player, not as an automaton. In other words, Mephisto is correctly described, whereas De Kempelen's figure was incorrectly described. We may include with this general description the special remarks about the construction of the objects exhibited. Throughout the interior of the so-called automaton, the spectators were deceived. Everything said and done was intended to carry the false impression that no person was concealed within the figure or the chest. The assistant who exhibits the interior of Mephisto simply shows what he purports to show, that there can be no concealed player in the figure of Mephisto, in the seat, or in the table, and it is certain there is none.

But we may fairly consider Mephisto with special reference to the ingenuity with which the secret of the arrangement by which the figure conducts his game is concealed. The maker distinctly admits that the figure is worked by a concealed player, nay, he is perfectly ready in conversation with friends who may visit Mephisto's room to admit a number of other matters, a knowledge of which should go a long way towards explaining the mystery. Yet he

leaves a most ingenious riddle for them to answer, a very pretty problem for them to solve.

In the first place, we may dismiss the notion that, as in all other cases, a player is concealed within the figure and appurtenances exhibited to the public. The figure of Mephisto is that of a lean man of about the medium height. The head is movable in a number of ways. It nods, turns round, moves backwards, and on close inspection one can see, in some of these movements, where the waxen representation of a head and neck terminates behind the ornamental collar clothing the bust. The bust itself can be examined, prodded with a stick, and generally maltreated (in appearance) as freely and with as little real injury as the Mephistopheles of Goethe received from the sword of Marguerite's enraged brother. The largeness of the seat attracts some attention at first, and undoubtedly if the seat and the lower half of Mephisto's body formed one enclosure, a small human figure could be concealed therein. But the assistant passes a book between the two, even while the play is going on, and while also the upper half of the bust, from which the board could alone be seen by a player concealed in the figure, is open to inspection. The table on which the board is set is shaped precisely like an ordinary club chess-table; the board is also precisely like the ordinary chess-board except that there is a shallow circular depression in the middle of each square, for the men to be set in. The assistant, be it noted, is very careful to set any man straight which has not been properly placed in its circular hollow; but there is good reason for this when we remember that if a man is not set right the top is not central, and the hands of the figure therefore would be apt to strike the head instead of grasping it. This is the more to be considered because the men are not, as has hitherto been the case, of forms specially designed for mechanical play (as all of the same height and so forth) but have the forms of the ordinary Staunton chessmen.

It is next to be noticed that the concealed player does not survey the board set before Mephisto. There are mirrors in the room, and there is nothing in the ordinary arrangements which would forbid the belief that the concealed player sees a reflected image of board and men in an adjacent room: but as games have been played with the figure and board entirely screened under paper covers, this explanation must be summarily dismissed.

The concealed player does not see his adversary, though he can hear him, if he speaks pretty loud and clearly. I infer this partly from what M. Gumpel has mentioned to me (not privately, for he was aware when he spoke that I was so interested in his ingenious work that I might probably write about it), partly from

years ago, when the building was present, gives the Philadelphia, on the o'clock. The east revolving flames, the dozen dwellings were already curling windows of the well this building, near years. Struggling hall, and, passing staircase. The thick smoke, now writhing flame. about him. Moscow perish, anxiety. It is work, or the heard through thousands, then whispered off.

I have Mephisto. I imagine that the concealed important differs from described other was Kempelen with this construction the so-called said and person who purports figure there. But the in, the fi

to under the control of the concealed day of my playing with him, after a on the first (I was never much of twenty years have passed since I sat down that Mephisto would with me, saying this for the in- their turn. On this Mephisto raised and then nodded three or four times his recognition of my compliment and take the opportunity of mentioning a score, I should say, of games which I have only won one; though it is but I have never yet played with him as I have a chance of winning. Moreover, not a player who day after day plays con- at what may be called skittling chess, had it not at starting, a habitude for give him an advantage against good one who, within the last twenty years, has has once passed five years, without open- the other hand, however, it must be re- revealed player has disadvantages to contend never set down to a regular match game, Mephisto. I imagine that the concealed handicapped by these disadvantages to the extent Such is, I am told, the opinion of Steinitz respecting the player who—to his the games of the mechanical chess-player. ladies, Mephisto displays a gallantry which expected from a true Mephistopheles, assuming has correctly caught the character of He has not only allowed ladies who are inferior force to defeat him, but has even in some compelled them to do so by a series of moves what is called "sumato" a barbarous hybrid which sought as quickly as possible to replace by a respect- After his defeat by a lady, Mephisto offers his hand on he has defeated has been defeated by a gentle- his head pleasantly, unless the game has presented features In the latter case he may be less polite. a few weeks ago he gave the form of mate known as a "mated mate" which the mate open- able to

now, however, in a new building, back the lighting, make it appear, strictly speaking,

(It was not given, of course, in the usual way which everyone knows ; but still mate came at the sixth or seventh move.) On this Mephisto took his opponent's king from the board and tapped said opponent's nose with the piece, which to say the least did not imply respect for his opponent's powers. Occasionally he makes movements not connected with the game. Thus on one occasion a lady was standing near Mephisto who expressed laughingly some alarm at her proximity to so terrible a being. As if to show that he could be terrible if he wished, Mephisto brought round his arm and seized her dress, at which she shrieked in real terror. Usually, however, Mephisto's movements are all connected more or less closely with the chess play. He surveys the board every now and then, nodding his head thoughtfully as though taking note of the relative powers of the two colours, or considering how such and such lines of play might be pursued. If he makes a very damaging move he looks up at his opponent with a most sardonic smile. If his opponent delays over-long, Mephisto bestows the same look upon him, but with greater persistency. If a game which has lasted some time seems tolerably equal, Mephisto goes through the movement of counting his own men and his opponent's, and then removes his king to the middle of the board. Nor does this always imply, as some seem to imagine, that in reality he has rather the worst of the game. I have seen him win a game, which he had offered in vain to draw.

I have no intention of inquiring closely here into the nature of the arrangements by which Mephisto's play is conducted. Some tolerably safe inferences may, however, be made, and some points noticed which have come under my own observation during the course of several visits which I have paid to Mephisto's reception-room. We know that there is a concealed player ; and as he hears remarks made in a tolerably loud voice, we may infer that he is underneath the floor on which the figure is placed, for that is the only concealed place which is sufficiently near to the players and the bystanders. Since every move made by the player above is communicated at once to the concealed player, we can infer that as a piece is put down some corresponding indication is made on the concealed player's board. It is not yet clear to me whether he knows or does not know when his opponent leaves hold of a man so played. If he does not know, then he is occasionally apt to commit a mistake which in actual play only a tyro would make—moving before his opponent has in reality completed the move. I have seen this happen two or three times ; and in one

to give scholar's mate would mean playing the series of moves usually given under that heading in books on chess.

case the sequel was singular and rather significant. The player who was contending with Mephisto claimed his right to move the piece touched wheresoever he pleased (among the moves open to that piece). Accordingly he put back the piece which Mephisto had moved, and completed his own modified move. It so happened that this move was one which could have been made by that piece from the square to which she had been originally moved, but where she had not really been left. Mephisto proceeded to answer the move as if it had been *thus* made ; that is, as though his own piece had been allowed to remain on the square to which he had moved it. He was manifestly unconscious of the fact that his opponent had put this piece back. Finding no resistance to his fingers, he made a signal (striking his fingers against the table) indicative of dissatisfaction or perplexity. His opponent on this resigned the game, rather than enter into an unseemly dispute with his Satanic majesty. It became manifest in this way that the moves of the red men leave no trace on the concealed player's board. The same circumstance was made tolerably clear in the other cases in which Mephisto played before his opponent had, by leaving hold of the moved piece, completed the move. The assistant explained that Mephisto would take no notice of the return of his own piece to the square from which he had moved it. Doubtless we see here the reason why Mephisto plays always with the red men. The white men only communicate (by electrical connection, no doubt) their movements to the concealed player. His own men's movements, being made by himself, need not be communicated to him.

In conclusion, I would note that chess-players who like to play with a strong opponent can combine amusement with chess practice on very moderate terms, in Mephisto's apartment (No. 9 Strand). Instead of charging heavily, as some players of not superior strength are apt to do, he meets all opponents at sixpence a game. The room in which he plays is provided with chess-boards, so that visitors may amuse themselves with play while waiting for their turn with Mephisto, provided they do not prefer to watch his play. Moreover, there is a good chess library, and many of the best periodicals of the day, literary, scientific, and social, are placed on the library table. Mephisto's sanctum, indeed, merits far more numerous visits than it receives.

ERRATUM.—In my article on 'Calculating Boys,' in the last number of this magazine, the number 34,063 (p. 451, line 10) should have been 36,063.

A Town Vengeance.

BY JAMES PAYN.

THE whirligig of time brings about our revenges to most of us, but not quickly enough; and it is only natural (though very improper) that we should try to accelerate them. The Corsican will wait for years, and seems to bequeath the accomplishment of his cherished objects to his descendants; but we English are not so persevering. When a man, or a monster bearing some vague likeness to the human form—such as a reviewer, for example—annoys *me*, I wish to pay him out for it at once; otherwise, as time goes by, I am but too apt to forget my wrong and the wrongdoer; like the forlorn young gentleman who would weep over his faded love-token, but was unable, because he could not remember ‘who the deuce it was who gave him that forget-me-not,’ I lose remembrance of the reptile, and he crawls on, uncrushed; which is a failure of justice.

In the early ages of Society, the first impulse of a man who had received an injury at the hands of another was to beat him; but the inconvenience—or, at all events, the possible inconvenience—of such a course of conduct is obvious, and was obvious even then. As civilisation began to exercise its influence, men’s ideas became less crude; and they hired others to do the beating for them. This was an excellent plan if you were rich; Charles the Second, for example—it is true he was not rich, but he was a king, and could get things done for him—paid out Sir John Coventry in this way very completely; but if you were poor there was a difficulty. The great question of Capital and Labour confronted you at the outset; where were you to get the money from to hire your men? There were also all sorts of complications respecting ‘Breach of the Peace,’ ‘Assault and Battery,’ and other pettifogging obstacles, which have increased year by year to that extent that it has become very difficult to pay out old scores without incurring new ones. In the good old times the offended party would gather his friends together, and falling on the mansion of his unsuspecting enemy by night, would put him and all his family to the sword. But the days of chivalry are fled.

The shifts to which a noble spirit is driven when he would avenge himself for an injury, without risking the action of the law, are most insufficient and pitiable. Perhaps the best of them is the

anonymous letter. It is a medium through which you can at least speak out and relieve your mind, independently of the miserable trammels of convention. Even this, however, is not of universal utility, for some people write so badly that their anonymous letter remains undecipherable; it might be an invitation to dinner, or even a testimonial of their personal admiration and esteem, for anything their enemy knows to the contrary. As an example, however, how well it may be made to work (up to a certain point), I narrate the following story.

Mr. John Blades, of Clifford Cottage, Shepherd's Bush, and also of Lincoln's Inn, had amassed a little property as clerk to a well-known barrister who afterwards became one of Her Majesty's judges; and when the latter left the Bench for another place where there are no criminals to be tried, Mr. John Blades invested his savings in a mansion in Pimlico and took in gentlemen lodgers. He was an honest simple fellow, in spite of the legal society he had mingled with, and had once on his own responsibility lent a strange gentleman, who had called in his employer's absence and represented himself as a friend from the country who had lost his railway ticket, thirty shillings.

Nor was Mrs. Blades, his wife, a woman by any means fitted to take in lodgers, but rather the reverse. She was of a nervous temperament, easily cajoled, and still more easily frightened; and as to abstracting other people's tea and sugar, not to speak of coals, her conscience was so tender that she would have described such practices as thieving. She was an excellent cook, and, though now in fairly good circumstances, did not think it derogatory to her self-respect to assist in the more delicate operations of the cuisine. Her clear soups were beyond the dreams of any hotel proprietor, and, to say truth, would have put to shame most of the Clubs; the little delicacies she could serve up for breakfast were things to think upon before you got up in the morning; while her suppers, though equally dainty, were forgotten when you went to bed. Her house was as clean as soap could make it, and furnished even to the linen in a manner that astounded persons who, accustomed to lodgings elsewhere, could not understand why their feet did not protrude beyond the upper sheet, or their pillows were so much thicker than a pancake.

She had her weaknesses, like the rest of the world (save you and me, reader), but they were all venial ones; the chief perhaps was a somewhat unreasonable respect for the aristocracy of her native land. This peculiarity, however (which, moreover, was shared by her husband), had never led her to set her cap at any aristocrat, and as she was now five-and-fifty it was not likely that

it ever would, or, at all events, that any mischief should result from it.

The first gentleman who was so fortunate as to take apartments in the house of this worthy couple was the Hon. Rollo Plantagenet Tallboise, the son of an Irish viscount, Lord Cameleopard, but who had inherited, to judge by his want of ready money, very little beyond a magnificent brogue and a noble spirit of independence. Accustomed, as without doubt he had been, in the halls of his ancestors, to every luxury and refinement, this young man (for he still looked young, thanks to a constitution that defied the effects of a somewhat dissipated career) had yet not a fault to find with Mrs. Blades's domestic arrangements. That was one of the traits by which she recognised his birth and breeding; your ordinary lodger, she had been told, was always picking holes in this and that, and hanging on to the bell-rope. The Honourable Rollo gave very little trouble, and what he did give was accompanied with a smile so condescending, and a manner so urbane, that it was quite a pleasure to wait upon him. He was not easily put out, except by any application for money on the part of tradesmen, or even cabmen: these were what he termed 'disgusting details;' and when they were forced upon his notice, he had a way of lifting his eyebrows which was very effective; Mrs. Blades, who had a strain of poetry in her nature, said it reminded her of a man pained by the weight of a coronet. The pain, however, did not last long, for almost everything was settled for him by herself and put down in his monthly account.

Of course he inhabited the first floor and lived on the best of everything that money—or rather Mrs. Blades's credit—could procure. His smoking in the drawing-room was a blow to her because of the new curtains, but Mr. Tallboise, she felt, was not a sort of gentleman one could remonstrate with; it was some comfort to know that he smoked the very best cigars, or at all events the most expensive, which she had an excellent reason for being convinced of; and that if his champagne occasionally disagreed with him, it was from no fault of the vintage. He paid Mrs. Blades the compliment of dining at home, instead of at his club because of her clear soups, which he pronounced to be as good as any he had tasted at the paternal table at Castle Macgillicuddy.

At the end of the first month Mrs. Blades brought up with his breakfast things, neatly folded on a silver salver, his little account; he took it from her with a gracious expression of countenance, and carelessly looked at the total—which was in three figures, and not small ones.

'My dear Mrs. Blades,' he said, 'you and your good husband

must have been cheating yourselves; the amount is perfectly ridiculous.'

'It is quite correct, sir,' she answered modestly; 'as we pay ready money for everything, the items perhaps are less than you may have expected.'

'Less, my dear madame? I positively feel as if I was robbing you. Moreover, there is no commission. I must insist upon remunerating you for the loss of the interest of your money. Let us say five per cent. for the three months.'

'But there is but one month, sir.'

'True; but my custom is to settle all these little matters at the end of the quarter.—Your coffee this morning is positively perfection;' and he took up the newspaper in his jewelled fingers to intimate that the interview was closed.

Poor Mrs. Blades would much rather have had Mr. Tallboise's cheque, but her powers of resistance were unable to cope with such aristocratic manners. To repeat an application for money to an Honourable in a flowered dressing-gown, who had just praised her coffee, was beyond her strength; something told her that it would evoke that lifting of the eyebrows which had so often filled her soul with pity for the wretches who had produced it. The excellent woman was a snob to the backbone, and she retired.

'What!' inquired Mr. Blades, who was waiting in the back sitting room to take Mr. Tallboise's cheque to the bank, and who could read countenances if he couldn't read characters, 'has he not paid?'

'No; he hasn't. He says he always settles at the end of the quarter; and begs you will put on five per cent. for the interest of the money.'

'But that won't *do*, you know,' exclaimed Mr. Blades; 'it really won't. And he has given an undertaking to settle monthly.'

'You had better speak to him yourself, then; but mind you are very civil, John; say it's nothing to him of course, but that it's a good lump of money for such as you to be out of pocket in.'

It was quite unnecessary to tell Mr. Blades to be civil. He was a small and gentle-mannered man, whose very aspect seemed to apologise for obtruding his presence anywhere, far more on the privacy of an Honourable. He went upstairs and knocked timidly at the drawing-room door. Mr. Tallboise, who was in the tobacco stage of his repast, removed his cigar in astonishment, and suffered the smoke to wreath itself above his well-brushed head like a halo.

'Mr.—Blades, is it not?'

'Yes, my lord—I mean sir; it is about this little account. If you could find it convenient—not that I mean to be pressing—it *is nothing to you*, I know, but it's a good lump——'

'One moment, Mr. Blades,' interrupted his lodger with frigid dignity. 'It's nothing to me, as you say; the sum to which you allude is a mere bagatelle; but I am not accustomed'—here his eyebrows went to work as usual—'to be pressed for money. My principle—and it is invariable—is to pay my bills quarterly. If you insist upon it, I will settle this matter at once;' here he produced a gigantic cheque-book—'but mark me, in that case I leave your apartments this evening.—You would prefer my remaining? Very good. Be so good as to touch the bell. I have quite finished.'

The last remark referred to the breakfast things, but its tone gave it a wider significance. Mr. Blades found himself in the back parlour without quite knowing how he got there.

'I could do nothing with him,' he said; 'he would have left the house if I'd pressed it. He's such a masterful sort of man.'

'He's accustomed to command; that's where it is,' said his wife admiringly; 'well, we've got the money to go on with, and five per cent. for three months will pay us handsomely; he's open-handed, like all the quality—that I will say; I do believe I might have got ten per cent. for the asking.'

Here at least Mrs. Blades showed her sagacity; she might have got ten or even twenty per cent., just as easily as five.

On the day before the three months expired the Honourable Rollo Plantagenet Tallboise left his apartments rather suddenly, thereby saving himself the annoyance—which his sensitive nature had always so much resented—of being asked for a sum of money—which on that occasion would have amounted to six hundred pounds. I think, under the circumstances, that after a decent interval during which they waited for a communication—with enclosure—from their aristocratic lodger, Mr. and Mrs. Blades were justified in writing to Lord Cameleopard of Macgillieuddy Castle (the only reference he had given them), to inquire as to the whereabouts and solvency of his missing relative. The chagrin of the worthy couple may be conceived on their receipt of a letter by return of post, to say that his lordship had no relative of the name of Rollo Plantagenet Tallboise, and knew of no such person.

If the story had ended there the case had been a common one of mere credulity and imposture. Mr. and Mrs. Blades would have paid six hundred pounds for their experience and for the acquaintanceship of a person who, as they both agreed, had behaved (up to a certain point) as like a nobleman's son as could be: but they had not done with Mr. Tallboise yet.

Exactly a month from the date of their lodger's departure, some old friends came to dine with them, in consequence of an

invitation which they had never sent. The next day some more friends, not so intimate, arrived, with the same object; and on the next about twenty of their acquaintances came quite as unexpectedly to enjoy the hospitality of luncheon. Later on, that day, there was an evening party at their house of about half the people they had ever known, and of a good many whom they didn't know. 'Supper at twelve' was in the corner of the cards of invitation, and written in the same hand (evidently a feigned one) as the forged letters. Mr. and Mrs. Blades were hospitable folks, but as they only had a cold joint of beef in the house and a few eggs for their own consumption, these 120 persons or so had necessarily to be sent empty away.

This went on for weeks, till they found that life, with so much involuntary party-giving, was growing intolerable. Who could be playing them this cruel trick? and why? were the two questions the consideration of which wore this worthy pair almost to thread-paper. The second, however, soon found an answer. The following note arrived in the now well-known handwriting: 'If you do not insert the following advertisement, "*I will pay the fifty guineas all right, J.B.*" in the "*Daily Trumpeter*" of Tuesday next, you shall see what you shall see. The manner of paying the money can be afterwards arranged. All I wish to be assured of for the present is that you have a willing mind. Vengeance.'

That there should be a person who wanted fifty guineas out of 'J.B.' or anybody else, if he could get it, was not beyond all human experience; but that he should also want 'vengeance' was inexplicable.

Poor Mr. Blades reviewed the incidents of his blameless life for a single case in which he had incurred the resentment of a fellow-creature, in vain; he could only conclude that he was the victim of some malevolent maniac. He consulted a legal friend (one Mr. Joshua Figgins) in this extremity, who recommended that the required advertisement should be inserted, and a trap laid for the apprehension of the offender; but here Mr. Blades exhibited a somewhat-unlooked-for determination of character. 'I will never promise what I don't mean to perform,' said he; 'let the wicked creature do his worst.' Nevertheless he looked forward to Tuesday, and afterwards, with very melancholy forebodings.

On Wednesday morning at eleven o'clock his quiet residence in Pimlico was besieged by a crowd of females—no less than eighty in all—who had all come for a cook's place which had been advertised that morning on very advantageous terms in the 'Trumpeter.'

Great cooks, small cooks, lean cooks, tawny cooks,
Brown cooks, black cooks, grey cooks, brawny cooks,

and an immense variety of plain cooks, thronged the thoroughfare, demanding compensation for their disappointment and their return fares by train and omnibus. Mrs. Blades, though a better cook than any of them, felt herself wholly unequal to the situation, and had to appeal to the police.

The new lodger on the first floor had heart-disease, and protested that if such a thing occurred again it would be the death of him.

In the afternoon another letter arrived: 'Your next reception will take place on Tuesday between 10 and 2. All the "wanted" in the "Trumpeter" are invited. Vengeance.'

And they came—about 450 of them—filling up the entire street. The new lodger left (palpitating) at 2.30, for a less desired, however inferior, place of residence. By the evening's post came another letter: 'I hope you liked it. Your next grand reception is fixed for Sunday, from 8 to 12. There is only one way of avoiding it. Advertise to V. "*I will pay the 75l. all right.*" My terms are raised, you see. Vengeance.'

Before the Sunday came round, however, another despatch arrived: 'I have invited a thousand persons to wait upon you on Wednesday. Vengeance.' It seemed as if the wretch's fury was so ungovernable that he was obliged to relieve it by constant correspondence; and Mr. Blades's theory of his being a malevolent maniac derived, so far, some corroboration.

The grand reception held, in spite of themselves, by this unhappy couple was on a scale of unprecedented magnitude, and transformed their ordinary quiet Sabbath into a Saturnalia. 'We shall certainly be indicted for a nuisance under the Disorderly House Act, 17 and 18 Vict. c. 45, s. 12,' muttered poor Mr. Blades, quoting a scrap of his old legal learning.

The worthy pair had each betaken themselves behind one of their drawing-room curtains, from which, unseen, they could watch the madding crowd of place-seekers in the street below.

'There he is!' cried Mrs. Blades with sudden vehemence; 'I see his face. THAT'S THE MAN THAT HAS DONE IT.'

'Where, where?' cried her husband, leaving the shelter of the curtain in his excitement, and thereby evoking a yell of execration from the mob below.

But whatever poor Mrs. Blades had seen, it was too much for her. 'Blind, blind!' she cried; 'The Hon. Tallboise!' and went off in a dead faint.

The remark at first was set down to some sudden burst of regret at having been deceived by the aristocratic blandishments of her late lodger ; but upon her resuscitation, it appeared that, while scanning the street, the poor woman's frightened glance had happened to fall on a window at no great distance, where, insufficiently hidden by the blind, peered forth a face she knew, lit up with a certain fiendish exultation. That this gentleman had set a-going the proceedings which afforded him so much amusement was a conviction that flashed upon her at once, and from which she never swerved.

'She will take her affidavit,' said Mr. Blades to Mr. Figgins, who was once more summoned for a consultation, 'as that is Tallboise, and that he wrote the letters.'

'Very good : we shall have to prove it, however : we have no hold on the fellow, except as to the money he owes you, and which you may take your oath you will never see. He ain't worth powder and shot in that way.'

'Then, is he to worry us to death, like this ?' cried Mr. Blades, pointing to a neat little note which had just arrived from 'Vengeance,' giving notice of another 'grand reception.'

'Well, he can be prosecuted for an annoyance, of course ; but where you'll have him best is "for attempting to extort money by threatening letters."'

'But that's transportation for life, isn't it ?' exclaimed Mrs. Blades pitifully. 'I am sure neither John nor I could sleep comfortably in our bed, if we had sent a fellow-creature, and such a nice gentlemanly person as we used to think him, beyond seas.'

Mr. Blades, who, if not 'an angel in top-boots,' was a sort of Early Christian in list slippers, nodded adhesion.

'It's not Transportation,' said Mr. Figgins drily. 'Just leave the matter in my hands, and I'll see to it.'

On Monday morning a detective had taken the ground-floor apartments of the house in which the enemy was located—and before noon the same day had found an opportunity to sift the contents of his waste-basket. He found a letter in fragments, which he pasted together, and in which the words 'reception' and 'Vengeance' occupied prominent positions ; and before the business of the day was concluded in the nearest police office, the (late) Honourable Rollo Plantagenet Tallboise made his appearance in the dock.

I had this story from the lips of a clergyman who was soon afterwards thrown a good deal into his society—(being chaplain of a gaol)—and who was much impressed by this gentleman's conduct and character. That he had been a swindler from his cradle was *nothing*—for some swindlers have their good points ; but he thought

him on the whole the most heartless villain that had ever come under his professional notice. A selfishness that soared to sublimity as combined in his case with a cruelty and arrogance that would have done honour to Cetewayo—that is, as painted by his enemies. (He would do no man wrong, and some assert that he is the Edward the Sixth of Caffreland.) Like all wretches of his stamp, he detested those on whom he had inflicted any injury ; while simple and kindly natures, like those of his landlord and landlady, he not only looked upon as his natural prey, but any resistance on their part to his selfish greed, seemed a species of high treason. That he had been compelled, however delicately, by the worthy pair to leave comfortable lodgings after so ridiculously short a time as three months, he resented much as ‘ Mr. Alexander Nicalaievich ’ resents Nihilism ; and it was the Chaplain’s firm conviction that his attempt to extort money from his late host and hostess was a motive quite secondary to his desire for ‘ Vengeance.’

If the Rev. Gentleman was right, are not some philosophers a little hasty in attributing a certain modicum of good to everybody ? and is it so certain that ‘ the worst possible use we can put a man to ’—in all cases—is to hang him ?

The Ballad of the Barmecide.

To one in Eastern clime,—'tis said,—
 There came a man at eve with "Lo!
 Friend, ere the day be dimmed and dead,
 Hast thou a mind to feast, and know
 Fair cates, and sweet wine's overflow?"
 To whom that other fain replied—
 "Lead on. Not backward I nor slow;
 —Where is thy feast, O Barmecide?"

Thereon the bidder passed and led
 To where, apart from dust and glow,
 They found a board with napery spread,
 And gold, and glistening cups a-row.
 "Eat," quoth the host, yet naught did show.
 To whom his guest—"Thy board is wide;
 But barren is the cheer, I trow.
 —Where is thy feast, O Barmecide?"

"Eat"—quoth the man not less, and fed
 From meats unseen, and made as though
 He drank of wine both white and red.
 "Eat,—ere the day to darkness grow.
 Short space and scant the Fates bestow!"
 What time his guest him wondering eyed,
 Muttering in wrath his beard below
 —"Where is thy feast, O Barmecide?"

ENVOY.

TIME,—'tis of thee they fable so.
 Thou bidd'st use at, and still denied,
 Still fasting, from thy board we go:—
 "Where is *thy* feast,—O Barmecide?"

AUSTIN D

Queen of the Meadow.

BY CHARLES GIBBON.

(The right of translation is reserved.)

CHAPTER XXX.

A PIPELIGHT.

SHE had forgotten all about the doctor's orders that Job was on no account to be excited. She did not know that at each succeeding visit the order had been insisted upon with increasing emphasis; and much of Michael's time was taken up in carrying out the injunction. All business matters were passed over as lightly as it was possible to do without making Job feel that everything was done and said to please him, because absolute quietude was necessary. His excursions to the garden-seat had become rapidly less frequent; and although the atmosphere was warm to those in health, he spent most of his time shivering before a fire in the parlour, the table drawn close to his chair with his desk and papers upon it. He still was pleased by the fancy that he was working to some purpose to retrieve his lost fortune. His pipe and his favourite ale jug were also beside him. The Doctor had made an attempt to stop the ale, but Job became so violent when he detected the attempt that the ale jug was instantly ordered back to its place.

'It will make little difference,' said the Doctor kindly, as he bade Michael good-bye.

Michael had not told Polly how very serious the position of his father had become; he did not like to worry her with the details of the steady progress towards the end.

The thought uppermost in her mind at this moment was that she must assure herself of the truth or falsehood of what she had been told. If it proved to be false, there could be no pardon for the man who had told her such a wicked lie. Yet he had not attempted to extort any promise from her. He had acted straightforwardly; he was himself conducting her as fast as he could to the place where she might most easily put his words to the proof. This did not look like the action of one who was playing a petty trick in order to entrap her into an engagement by a pretence of magnanimity and disinterested affection. So far the argument

was in Walton's favour ; and, if this strange story were true, the evasion with which Michael had met all her enquiries as to the results of the bank failure would be explained.

It *might* be true ! As the idea assumed probability she felt dizzy and confused.

Jim was speeding along the road at a splendid pace ; but the pace was slow to her impatience. Spears of sunlight flashed through the trees with dazzling brightness, and the hedgerows were almost grey with dust. The road, winding in and out like a yellow ribbon, seemed of interminable length, and the glimpses of it on the high ground a-head—fluttering through fields busy with harvest life, till it disappeared altogether amongst the trees on the horizon—suggested a journey that under the circumstances was one of torture.

Jim was pulled up sharply at the foot of the lane leading to Marshstead, and Polly was on the ground as soon as Walton, although he had leaped down the moment the horse stopped.

‘ I shall wait here,’ he said.

She made no reply, but started up the lane with rapid steps. She was halfway towards the house before she could collect her thoughts at all. Then she checked her steps by a violent effort of self-control, and forced herself to walk slowly in spite of the impulsive desire to rush forward and to learn the best or the worst at once. She measured her steps ; she even counted them in the strenuous endeavour to recover something like self-possession, and to realise what it was she was going to ask. She did not like to own how much this strange story had affected her, and she could not think calmly about how she was to act.

In spite of all her efforts, she entered the parlour with flushed cheeks and out of breath.

There was Job seated in the old-fashioned arm-chair, but he was propped up by pillows, a rug over his knees, and he was as close to the fire as he could be placed without danger. There was Michael standing near him, one hand full of papers, whilst the other turned them over as if he were busy searching for something.

Michael started on Polly's entrance, hastily dropped the papers, and advanced to her.

‘ It was very kind of you to come,’ he said, taking her hand, and adding in a nervous undertone, ‘ Dad is wandering a good deal to-day, and you must not mind what he says.’

‘ What are you jabbering about there ? ’ grumbled the old man. ‘ Can't you speak up and let us know what it's all about ? No secrets here, I tell you. I won't have them ; they lead to trouble.

I've suffered for them, and I won't have any more. . . . Bless my soul, Polly, it's you !'

'Yes, uncle.'

She was standing in front of him, scarcely knowing what she was to say, the change in his manner and appearance was so great since she had last seen him—only two days ago.

'What's brought you here at this time of day?' he continued querulously, and moving about in his chair as if seeking something. 'You ought to be in the fields seeing what's done. Don't you go playing the fine lady, Polly, for the master's eye is worth half-a-dozen scythes and a pair of horses, even so be as you never lifted a hand yourself. What are you doing here?'

She would have answered directly, 'Because I want to know whether it is you or I who lose by the bank failure;' but, lifting her eyes, she saw the anxious expression on Michael's face, and the Doctor's warning recurred to her.

'I came to see you, uncle,' she said with affected gaiety; 'and I don't think I shall come again if you are so ungrateful as to scold me for it.'

Whilst Job was mumbling, and still hunting uneasily for the something he had lost, she took a sheet of note paper and a pencil from the desk. She wrote hastily:

'I want to know whose money is lost; I have information. If you do not answer, I shall speak.'

She handed it to Michael, and marked the expression of surprise and distress which passed over his face as he read the words. That was enough to confirm her fear; Walton had told the truth. Still, she wished to have the confirmation direct from Michael's lips. Had he suspected her object in calling, and had he been trying to mislead her again by warning her, the moment she entered, that Job was wandering, so that his words were not to be regarded?'

Michael was pale, but very calm. He did not attempt to write as she had done; he crumpled the paper in his hand and threw it into the grate, but it sprang back and fell inside the fender.

'Wait,' was the answer he gave in a quiet voice.

'What are you two doing?' cried Job impatiently; when he was thought to be least observant his perception of what was passing seemed to be most acute.

'Nothing, dad.'

'Ah, you're good at that. You know you ought to be seeing after things when I'm not able to get about, but you're always

ready to lazy at home. It was different when I was a lad. . . . Where is my pipe, Michael ?'

He called his son every five minutes, and then scolded him for not being out at work. Michael handed him the pipe, and Polly noted a strange nervousness in his manner. But she was determined to carry out her purpose.

'Answer, or I shall speak,' she whispered as he passed her.

'What did you say ?' exclaimed Job ; 'speak ? That's just what I want you to do.'

'So she will in a minute. Give her time to take breath. She must have been walking fast and requires a rest. Don't you see how flushed she is, and how bright her eyes are ?'

Michael accompanied the words with such a forced laugh that Polly felt sick with apprehension, and as he spoke he hurriedly thrust into his pocket a box of matches which he took from the table.

'Why don't you sit down, Polly, when you are tired ? Give me a light, lad.'

There were two papers lying at Job's elbow ; Michael took one of them, gave it a twist, and placed it on the table.

'There's paper, dad ; I want to see how strong you are. Can you light for yourself to-day ?'

'Do you think I can't light my own pipe ?' was the indignant exclamation as the old man snatched up the twisted paper and thrust it into the fire. 'It's too thick, and won't burn,' he added petulantly, after several ineffectual attempts to obtain a light.

'Tear it,' was the prompt suggestion. 'I want to see you do it all with your own hand. Are you strong enough to tear it into strips so that Polly can make pipelights for you ?'

Job, in order to prove his strength, angrily tore the charred paper into shreds and threw all into the fire except one, with which he lit his pipe ; then he leaned back on his chair fatigued by his irritation more than by his exertion, but with the self-satisfied air of one who has accomplished something.

'Now are you satisfied ?' he said, as he smoked and gasped asthmatically.

'Very much, dad ; I see you are much stronger than I believed. The Doctor will be glad when I tell him, and Polly can bear witness how cleverly you tore up the paper and burnt it. But you did not give her a chance of making the lights for you.'

'It ain't good paper for lights, that's why I pitched it away. You can try it, Polly, if you like, with that bit there.'

He nodded towards one of the strips which had fallen at his feet. She picked it up and mechanically began to roll it into a spiral form between her finger and thumb. The paper was stiff,

and the process was slow ; it was tough writing-paper, and there was writing upon it. She was in no hurry, for in the occupation she found time to search for the reasons of Michael's strange manner. That his gaiety was assumed—and badly assumed—to hide some anxiety had been plain to her from the first ; but she was utterly at a loss to account for his concealing the matches and insisting upon his father using the paper. That the explanation he had given was not the real one she felt sure. She was about to give the spiral scrap a final twist, in order to secure the end, when she saw her own name upon it, written in square formal characters not at all like Michael's penmanship, and they certainly were not formed by Uncle Job's hand. She made the twist, but she did not place the pipelight on the chimney-piece.

Michael was smiling, but there was perspiration on his brow, as if he, too, had been walking fast. He was evidently trying to delay her action in spite of her threat. His motive must be a kindly one, she did not doubt. But there was mystification of some sort and she was impatient. Uncle Job came to the rescue.

'That bank failure has been a bad business for a lot of us,' he observed as he smoked meditatively.

Here was an opportunity to lead up to the information she required.

'Very bad indeed, uncle. There's poor Hibbert of the Grange, he is completely ruined, and everything is to be sold off on Monday. Didn't you see the advertisements ?'

'No, but if he has come to such a pass I'll have that brindle cow of his. He wouldn't sell it before, but we may do him a good turn by bidding for it. She's worth a good penny, Michael ; don't you lose her.'

'Can you afford to buy just now, uncle ?' said Polly.

'What should hinder ? I could afford to buy a hundred head if—' he paused, and a cloud seemed to fall over his face as he added, 'if it hadn't been for that swindling bank.'

'Then you have lost a great deal ? You have not told me about it, you know, and Michael has not given me any definite explanation, either.'

'Ay, I have lost—in a way ; and you have lost, too.'

'But nothing to speak of, is it ?'

'That will be as may happen.'

'I wouldn't go into these things at present,' interrupted Michael, who was standing by the table arranging the papers. He spoke coldly, for he felt that Polly distrusted him. 'We won't break down under our ill luck ; and Polly does not lose very much.'

'There's no saying what she may lose yet,' answered Job irritably. 'She hasn't done what I wanted—no more have you, for the matter of that, or you'd have been married afore now, and everything settled comfortable.'

From this outburst she comprehended that there was some arrangement between the father and son which did not please the former.

'I wish you would tell me what is my share in the losses, uncle,' she said with quiet firmness; 'I would like to know, and I ought to know.'

'True enough, you ought to know.' Have you put up the banns yet, Michael?'

'Not yet, but there is time enough.'

'Then I won't stand it any longer,' cried Job passionately. 'Whose fault is it?'

'Mine,' said Polly calmly, but the sight of her guardian's face made her already repent that she had pressed matters so far.

'Yours! Then I will tell you——'

'Dad!'

The word was uttered like a cry of pain, which startled Polly and subdued Job's passion.

'No, I won't tell you; I promised I wouldn't,' he said, taking up the paper which lay beside him; 'but, there, you can read my will, and that will let you see how you stand. You needn't read it all unless you like; you'll find what you want to know at the end.'

He emitted short quick puffs of smoke, and doggedly turned his face away from Michael. The latter breathed more freely than he had done a moment ago. He half sat on the edge of the table, swinging the foot which was lifted from the ground, and watching Polly.

She read every word carefully, searching for the promised explanation; but she could not find it. The only clause which had direct reference to her enquiry was one to the effect that, owing to the unfortunate failure of the County Bank, and peculiar circumstances in connection with that event, the testator lamented that he was unable to bequeath to his son, Michael, the fortune he had stored up for him. Immediately after that came the expression of Job's hope that before death took him away he would see Michael wedded to Mary Holt of the Meadow Farm, as he had always regarded her with a father's affection, and the great desire of his last days was to have the right to call her daughter.

Polly was touched by the affectionate mention of her name in *this passage* *anywhere*, and by the bequest of many of his

favourite belongings—his silver-mounted whip, several of his agricultural prize-medals, and, what he valued most of all, the Smithfield prize for his great pig.

Job expected to see her look surprised, if not angry, when she finished reading, but instead of that she rose and kissed him.

‘You are very kind, Uncle Job; I wish—I wish very much that I could please you.’

‘Have you read it all?’ gasped Job, astounded and confused by this strange way of taking what he considered a very sharp rebuke.

‘Every word of it, and I value the gifts you have made me more than I would have done a big fortune.’

‘Has she read the right will?’ said Job, turning with spasmodic jerks to the table, and dropping his pipe on the floor.

‘Yes, dad, she has read the right one,’ answered Michael without changing his position.

‘Then where’s t’other one?’

‘It was only waste paper, you know, dad, and that was it I gave you to light your pipe with.’

‘You oughtn’t to have done that without telling me, but it’s of no account, and as Polly now knows how things stand she’ll do what’s right.’

‘I will try, uncle,’ she said awkwardly, ‘but you would not like me to do what I believed to be wrong,—wrong both to Michael and to myself.’

‘Can’t see any wrong about it,’ grumbled Job as he placed the will in the desk and locked it up; ‘and if you are the lass I take you to be, you can’t see more than one way out of it, though you do take it so mighty cool. They didn’t want me to let you see it, but I’m glad I did, for maybe now we’ll get something settled.’

‘I am very grateful to you for letting me see it—and if your wishes may be carried out I—’

She did not know how to finish the sentence, her cheeks were tingling and her thoughts were performing a midge’s dance.

‘May be carried out!—they ought to be carried out, and you now know why.’

He was very angry by this time, and evidently his strength was beginning to give way. So, Michael:

‘Have no fear, Polly will do everything she can to please you. And now you must let us off for ten minutes to ourselves. Come along, Polly.’

With the presumption of an accepted suitor, he put his arm round her waist and almost lifted her towards the door; but he whispered appealingly:

'Forgive me, and wait.'

Job chuckled and laughed with delight, smacking his knees with feeble hands, and tears of joy trickled down his withered cheeks.

'Oho, oho, lad, that's the way of it, and you've both been trying to make a fool of me all the time. Ha! ha! ha! well, it is darned funny, but you needn't have worried me so long, Polly, with playing the coy maiden. Now I know why he never said a word about me showing you the will. Give her a kiss, lad, give her a hearty kiss.'

Michael boldly kissed her.

'That's right, that's right, a good sounding smack. Now be off with you—two's company, three's none, I know. Off with you, and God bless you.'

Michael drew her out of the room and closed the door quickly, his father continuing to chuckle with gleeful satisfaction. Polly had yielded partly in confusion and partly because she knew all was done to please her guardian. Now she withdrew herself from Michael's lingering arm. She was pallid and like one about to faint; and she said agitatedly,

'Michael, what is this?'

CHAPTER XXXI.

IN THE NIGHT.

Of the two Michael was perhaps the most agitated. Polly's unexpected arrival had taken him by surprise. Then her object, so plainly declared, added darkness to his surprise, for it pained him to think that she was willing to grant her own curiosity at the cost of his father's life in the teeth of the Doctor's orders. He did not know that she could not be so deeply impressed by these words as he was, and that she had not heard them repeated so often. He had never counselled for her sake in the first instance, and in the second for his father's. It was strange that the parent should have seen the secret which he did not.

Michael had been over-ruled during the last half-hour. It was necessary to save his father from the excitement which would surely follow an examination of a document which might prove fatal to him, and he was driven to this. He should not read the contents of the will, for the Doctor's orders were in his own hands. He had been obliged to act on the Doctor's orders, and he had been obliged to act on the Doctor's orders. He had been obliged to act on the Doctor's orders.

played a part repugnant to every sentiment of his nature: and he had succeeded!

But now he was obliged to carry on the deception; he had to apologise to Polly for his strange conduct without being free to reveal all his motives to her.

'I beg your pardon, Polly; my father's life was at stake, and I was compelled to act as I have done.' Then his conscience gave him a twinge, and he added nervously, 'I had other reasons, but there is no necessity to speak about them. I hope you will forgive me.'

She was still in a state of half-fright and half-indignation, strongly spiced with suspicion that he was keeping from her the most important point of all.

'What are the other reasons?'

'We must not talk here, it will disturb dad. Take my arm till we pass the window. It will please him to see us so. You can withdraw it then.'

He thought she seemed to hesitate, and that was the unkindest cut of all. But she did not take away her arm although he felt that it rested coldly on his. As they were passing the window he looked in, and nodded gaily to his father: and when they had passed, his countenance became again agitated. He was trying to make out how he might answer her questions satisfactorily without betraying his secret. The glow of sunlight which fell upon them made their mental storm of doubt and troublous forebodings seem the darker and more threatening.

If he could only have said to her, 'I love you so much that your ease of mind is more precious to me than any amount of money. I want you still to possess the fortune which you believe to be yours; but I know you would refuse to accept it at my hands. I believe that you have a right to it although you would say no, and the law, if appealed to, might say no. I could accept anything from your hands, because I love you so. But, my darling, my darling, I fear that you cannot knowingly accept this from me because you do not love me enough. Marry anybody you like, but leave me my secret happiness in knowing that I have done you a service.'

But he could not say that without appearing to take advantage of the position to plead his cause. If he had spoken thus, things might have gone differently; but it was impossible to tell part of the story without telling the whole.

'Don't ask me what the other reasons are,' he said, with subdued passion, as they walked under the shade of apple and cherry trees. 'Is it not enough that whatever I have done has been for

my father's sake—and yours? You know how he wishes us to be married. The idea haunts him day and night; he is never done talking of it, and even in his dreams he urges me to claim you. Polly, Polly, since you cannot love me, at least be my friend. I ask your forgiveness for all that I have said and done. There was no time for me to choose my words or actions, and I do love you, Polly—so much that I think I can be content with only your friendship. At least I would try.'

His half-suppressed emotion had more effect upon her than any outburst of passion could have had in her present mood. She had recovered from one state of agitation only to fall into another. She felt that she had been cruel to him in doubting him for a moment, and yet he was unkind, too, in denying her his confidence. The mystification continued; he had explained nothing, and she could not forget the manner in which the will had been burned.

'I know that you would do a great deal for my sake, and I do not feel that I deserve it. I do not feel that I could do nearly so much for you as I am sure you would do for me, and that is why—why'—(faltering for the right phrase which would be clear without paining him)—'that is why I do not like you to suffer on my account.'

She spoke softly, almost as if she were appealing to him not to press her too far, lest in her friendship she should say more than she intended. His eyes brightened with hope.

'I am glad you believe so much of me, Polly; but why will you not believe more? If there were any sacrifice to make for your happiness that was in my power, I would make it, and would be happy, if you could only care enough for me to say that you were pleased and relieved, instead of saying that it vexed you.'

'I didn't say that, Michael,' she replied awkwardly, as she was puzzling out the meaning of it all; 'I did not say that, only I would rather not—'

She paused, and he with some bitterness completed the sentence.

'You would rather not be under any obligation to me. Very well, I do not wish you to feel obliged to me, or to grant me any favour as a matter of gratitude or payment. I wish you to be free to do what you think will give you most happiness. That is why I have acted as I have done.'

'That is not what I mean, either. Why do you catch at my words and interpret them so badly? Your conduct has been queer ever since the failure of the bank. Of course you must feel put out; I know that, and have tried to make allowance for it.

But I have had information so strange and bewildering that I don't know what to do or think. Why will you not help me by explaining exactly how matters stand?'

For an instant Michael was tempted to take this course, no matter what the consequence might be. His fixed purpose to conceal his sacrifice, his pride, and his love—all combined to check the impulse.

They had arrived at a dilapidated bower, over which the ivy had scrambled until it trailed on the ground; but through the ivy an obstinate rose-tree had forced its flowers, and they in the sunlight laughed at the lovely parasite. A curtain of ivy had fallen over the door-way, and the bower had not been used for many days. In the old time when Polly was a child and Michael a schoolboy, this bower had been their favourite resort, and in it they had often played at housekeeping. Now they had grown up; life had become serious to them, and there was no more playing at housekeeping. There was no woman about the place to take care of the bower, and it had been left to the overgrowth of the ivy and the rose-tree.

They halted instinctively, but at the moment neither remembered the happy days they had spent there: was it long ago? Or was it only yesterday? At present, it might never have been at all.

'You must not ask, you must trust me,' he said.

'Then you cannot trust me!' she said, her clear eyes fixed upon him, wide open in wonder, and her suspicions returning.

'Ay, in anything.'

'You take a strange way of showing that you would. I have been placed in a very awkward position; I have been told that it is my money which has been lost, and when I ask you to tell me if this is true, you answer that I must trust you.'

'Who said that you were the loser?'

'Mr. Walton told me.'

Michael felt as if he had been suddenly plunged into a well of ice. The spell of the 'golden silence' always lays hold of the tongue of deep emotion; passion speaks, for it is ephemeral; love and despair are reserved, for they are eternal.

'I have always told you that you have lost something,' he said, with apparent calmness; 'we lose considerably, but not so much as to render assistance necessary. We can still go on comfortably enough, and I hope in time we shall recover all our losses. The exact amount of your loss and ours cannot be known until all the securities of the bank have been realised, but Mr. Patchett will render you an account as soon as possible. I hope this answer is *sufficiently plain*.'

'Now, you are vexed with me again. I suppose the information Mr. Walton gave me was only obtained from some of those foolish rumours which are always sent about by idle people who take a pleasure in meddling with their neighbours' private affairs. I *am* sorry, Michael, for having been so hasty. But why did you destroy that will?' she added abruptly, a suspicion of something wrong still lingering in her mind.

'My father destroyed it.'

'Yes, but you handed it to him, and you did not tell him what it was.'

'For the reason you have already heard—it was mere waste paper, and intended for the fire. The will which you read, and which my father has now locked up, is the right one. Is there anything more I can say?'

'Why are you so pale? Why do you speak so bitterly? Is it not right that when such a story comes to my ears I should ask you for an explanation, since I dare not trouble Uncle Job?'

'Yes, quite right. Was I speaking bitterly?—then it was in answer to my own thoughts rather than to you. I have told you the state of affairs as far as it can be told at present.'

He thought she was driving him too hard: he knew that she would never have acted in this way but for Walton's influence; and, despite all his resolutions to be calm when he should learn that his rival had won the day, he could not help thinking that he deserved better treatment at her hands.

She was unable to divine the complexity of thoughts, fears, and hopes which made him look so pale, and speak so bitterly; and so she said with some warmth:

'Yes, you have explained; but have you told me everything?'

He seemed to shake himself free from some stupefying cloud, and he answered deliberately:

'No! I have not told you everything, but I have told you all that I desire you to know.'

'Then I shall ask Mr. Walton to tell me the rest.'

'And he will certainly do everything in his power to satisfy you,' said Walton politely, as he halted in front of them.

She could have bitten her tongue out, the moment the words were uttered, such a flash of pain passed over Michael's face; and the inopportune arrival of Walton intensified her remorse.

CHAPTER XXXII.

'I WAS WAITING FOR YOU.'

'I AM sorry to interrupt your *tête-à-tête*, but I came to the conclusion that you had forgotten that I was waiting for you, Miss Holt, and that you had started for home across the fields. But wishing to make sure that you had done so before driving back to the Meadow—for you know I couldn't very well have gone home with your trap—I at last drove up to the house. I was told that you had gone into the garden with the young master, and I followed on purpose to enliven your conversation with a little discord. Pardon my impatience; I see that my presence was unnecessary, and that my kindly intentions are quite thrown away. I have been waiting exactly two hours and ten minutes—a fair spell for one who has not the slightest pretension to any degree of Griselda's special virtue.'

He spoke with his customary air of nonchalance, and, with some measure of amusement, he watched the two bewildered faces before him; he saw how Michael's darkened, and how Polly's passed through the phases of an April day.

'It is true, Mr. Walton, I had forgotten that you were waiting. Excuse me; the importance of the business we have had to discuss was the cause. I regret that you should have been put to so much inconvenience.'

'Pray, don't mention it—I am ready to do anything to oblige you. I dare say you have not concluded your business yet, and since I know you are still here, I shall retire and wait till to-morrow if you like.'

Polly could not decide whether he was sneering at her or making fun of her. She was angry with him. Michael spoke:

'Our business is finished, Mr. Walton. As you are aware, it is with you Miss Holt desires to speak now.'

He was so pale and calm that both Polly and Walton felt uncomfortable: the fact that she had come there secretly with Walton, that he had been waiting for her all this time, was like the last straw which broke the camel Hope's back. Walton, however, was not one to be easily disturbed by anything: main force might press his cork-nature under water for a time, but it slipped through the fingers and was up again dancing on the surface as if nothing had happened.

'Just so,' he said coolly, 'you were both too much engaged to notice me coming along, and I heard Miss Holt say that she intended to ask me something. I can only repeat that it will

afford me the greatest pleasure to give her any information I possess.'

Walton was able to make a fair guess at the position of affairs, and his present idea was to upset Michael by an audacious assumption of a perfectly confidential understanding with Polly. So far as Michael was concerned, he succeeded; but with Polly he did worse than fail—he roused in her a feeling of indignation. His levity at such a moment was contemptible; his assumption of familiarity was irritating. This did not help Michael, for he appeared to be wickedly silent, giving her no aid in her honest attempt to read the riddle rightly. The two men, in fact, seemed to be pitted against her, each wishing her to believe what would suit his own purpose. The practical way in which she usually looked at things stood her in good stead now. She gathered up all her strength, and spoke with a fair appearance of business-like decision.

'You, Mr. Walton, tell me that I am almost, if not quite, ruined by the failure of the bank; you, Michael, tell me that my loss is not of much consequence. You cannot both be right—I want to know who is wrong.'

She looked straight at Michael, as if eager that he should speak first. He answered the look rather than the words:

'I have nothing further to say.'

She turned to Walton.

'Strange to say, so far as I can make out, we *are* both right. I don't know what Hazell may have told you, but if he denies that the money lost was yours, then . . . Well, then, he can arrange the matter with his father and his own conscience.'

'Tell him that he is wrong,' implored Polly.

Michael was silent.

'Tell him that he is wrong,' she cried again, passionately; 'if you have ever cared for me, tell him that he is mistaken—that you have not tried to deceive me. . . Oh, Michael, do speak!'

The man almost trembled: her dear eyes seemed to be full of love as she made the appeal; she seemed to be offering him a last chance of winning her. But he was affronted by being thus driven into a corner by Walton. The consciousness that he had done all in kindness to her made him the more keenly sensitive to the humiliation of the position, and the more stubborn in his resolve to say nothing. He had sacrificed his fortune for her, and if he had perpetrated a crime he could not have been worse abused. But she had conjured with the potent spell—'if you ever cared for me!' Had it been used when they were alone he would *have told all, and given his reasons*—perfectly sound and simple

ones, he was convinced—for acting as he had done. But Walton was there, and so Michael :

‘Mr. Walton has told you that he is right and that I am right. He is most considerate; and as he has apparently come to a knowledge of our private affairs which I thought only my father, Mr. Patchett, and myself possessed, I leave him to give you the explanation with which he has professed his readiness to favour you. It will please him to do so, and it will relieve me. I did hope that you might never be troubled with the details of this unfortunate business—or at least that you might not learn them until circumstances had rendered you indifferent to them. But Mr. Walton is too clever for me. Whether he has acted an honest part in spying into my affairs and making use of his keyhole discoveries to my prejudice, you and he can decide for yourselves.’

That was the bitterest speech Michael had ever made, and his calmness added emphasis to it. Walton’s cheeks grew white when he was thus deliberately charged with spying and making keyhole discoveries. A hasty movement on his part was checked by Polly’s upraised hand.

‘Then, it is true!’ she said excitedly; ‘you have deceived me—you told me a falsehood when you assured me that my loss was of small account?’

‘I told you what is true,’ was the firm response, and there was a tender sadness in the tone, despite the harshness of the accusation—most harsh coming from her lips and in Walton’s presence.

‘Since Mr. Hazell will not satisfy me, I ask you, Mr. Walton, to give me a full explanation in his presence.’

‘I cannot give you a full explanation, and the matter is one requiring some more authentic information than can be given by an outsider. Hazell is telling you the truth, of course, but not all the truth. That is why his statement does not precisely agree with mine. He does not tell you why he is able to persist in saying that your loss is inconsiderable. The *if* and all that follows it are omitted. He is, in fact, hiding his light under a bushel in order that it may shine forth with the more brilliance when the time comes.’

Walton calculated rightly that the sneer would have the effect of making his rival more stubborn than ever, and he was glad of an opportunity to hit him back.

Polly began to guess vaguely at what Michael was trying to do, and in her present mood she was not grateful; for she could only make out that, with mistaken kindness, he had endeavoured to keep her in ignorance of the extent of her losses. She could not know that *he had replaced her fortune with his own, leaving*

himself comparatively poor that she might still be happy in the thought that she was well off, and free to choose her husband without being encumbered by any sense of obligation to him. Even if such a wild idea had entered her head, she would have felt sure that Job would have put a stop to such nonsense at once. She did not know how the old man's love of money had been overcome by the greater love of his son; how Michael had pleaded and argued until Job came to believe that the only way of achieving the object dearest to him—the marriage—was by leaving Polly to imagine that she had lost little whilst they had lost nearly all; how Michael had proved to him—as he had proved to himself—that if the matter were taken into a court of law the trustee would be compelled to refund the money; and how every chance of winning Polly would be lost if any question of this kind should arise. She did not know how Job's affection for her had made him ready to do anything which would spare her trouble, especially seeing that it made no difference, since when the two wedded it was of no consequence from which side the money came. Then, as the marriage was postponed from time to time, there was the slow but steady growth of suspicion in the old man's mind that Michael was too soft to take care of himself, and that Walton, or some one like him, would carry off the prize in spite of all the care he had taken to carry out her father's wishes and his own. Out of this fear rose the cry for Patchett and the new will in which he stated the whole case, believing that, when she clearly understood it, Polly would deal justly by Michael even if she should fail to take him for her husband.

It was that will which Job had destroyed, his son having given it to him for a pipelight.

She had no notion of the depth of torture to which he had subjected himself for her sake, and which the combination of pride, rejected love, and the fear of painng her, prevented him from revealing. But she saw that there was anguish in his face, whatever the cause, and she grasped his arm kindly.

'Once more, Michael, will you not speak? I cannot believe that you would attempt to deceive me, and yet all that you are doing forces that horrible thought upon me.'

The touch thrilled through him. He was uncertain what to say; she misunderstood his hesitation, and gradually withdrew her hand. At that he felt like one who, drowning, has touched the side of a steep rock, but, being too exhausted to avail himself of its aid, slips slowly back into the deadly embrace of the turbulent waves.

'You will not speak! I shall go to Patchett, then. He can-

refuse to explain my own affairs to me, and I am determined to learn all about them.'

'Patchett is the man,' said Walton briskly; 'he will tell you the truth in this case, although he is a lawyer.'

'As you please.' (Michael was uncomfortably calm as he spoke.) 'I have asked you to trust me; but since you find that possible, I should say that Mr. Patchett would be the best person from whom you could seek advice.'

'You leave me no alternative. I want you to be clear about this, Michael. I am doing this because I see no other way of coming at an understanding of what my position is in the strange predicament we have got into.'

She expected him even yet to save her the journey; but he bowed as if in entire submission to her will; and through all excitement she began to feel that she was doing him a wrong somehow, in spite of her exasperation at his obstinate reserve. If there was anything to tell, why could he not speak out? She did not make allowance for the evil effect of the presence of Walton. The latter spoke:

'Jim is ready. But before we start, Hazell, I would like you to know that my information came to me unsought, and was not obtained through any keyhole. I have used it to my advantage, mainly, and so would you have done.'

'It is quite possible, sir, for we never know how we may act until we are driven to it. So long as Miss Holt approves of your mode of dealing with this matter, I have no right and no desire to object.'

Polly had walked on, with quick and yet undecided steps. If she could only have spoken to Michael alone, she had no doubt that he would have made the whole difficulty plain to her; but he was annoyed about something, and would not give her a chance. She supposed it was jealousy that made him act so queerly, and man-like, whilst she wished that he would not be jealous, she would not say that she was displeased at having made him so. Walton in this respect sunk in her esteem; for he always appeared to be too self-assured to be capable of jealousy. In many ways, however, that might be the most convenient humour to find in a husband.

But she was not satisfied with herself, and she was still less satisfied with Walton. She doubted the propriety of allowing him to drive her into the village, his horse in her wagonette, too, remembering the effect produced on the occasion when she had asked him to drive her out of it. But she would not ask Michael to go with her; and being in haste, it would have been folly to have

proposed to walk, whilst to ask Walton to do so would have been still more ridiculous. Besides, the time was not one in which she could allow herself to be guided by any squeamish propriety. She was therefore again committed to Walton's care.

Michael's calm bearing seemed to render him the less approachable. She was asking herself over and over again, 'Was it a quarrel? would they ever make it up? Was she doing wrong? Was he right?' and so on. His quiet politeness was more offensive to her than any reproaches he might have uttered could have been. He assisted her into the wagonette and said 'Good day,' as he would have done if she had been any ordinary visitor. He even shook hands with Walton, but in saying 'Good-bye,' there was a decision in the tone suggesting that he did not expect to see him there again.

'Good-bye,' said Walton, looking back as the horse started; 'I hope we shall all be in better humour when we meet next time.'

He gave Jim his head, and he went off at a fine pace—Walton chuckling even at that moment at the idea of how Michael must be envying him the possession of such a horse. Bones followed with his stump of a tail in the air like a flag of triumph. Ted had run out to make friends with him on his arrival, but, after a contemptuous sniff, Bones had sat down to wait for his master, paying no heed to the gambols of the lively terrier. Ted gave a parting bark, and then, seeing his master standing quite still, he sat up, begging him quite plainly to come in to dinner, which had been ready for some time.

Michael watched them driving down the green lane, and his gaze remained fixed in the same direction long after they had disappeared. He noted that Polly had not once lifted her head to look back, although, as she was seated in the hind part of the vehicle, she might easily have done so. He saw Walton triumphantly flourishing his whip, flicking leaves off the hedge or trees, and bending backward occasionally to say something to Polly. It was a small satisfaction to the man in his distress to observe that she appeared to pay no heed to her companion's remarks. Still, she did not look back; she did not give him any sign by which he could divine that she desired the rupture to be healed.

Was it really all over, then, and so quietly? What had been said—what done? He did not think that he had been unduly stern, and his reticence was on her account. Still, when she laid so much stress upon it, why might he not have taken her quietly aside and told her everything? The answer flashed through his brain sharply—because Walton was there, and she had refused to
‘him.

He did not go in to dinner; he sent a message to his father, and went into the stables, Ted following, and no doubt in his own way thinking there must be something the matter with the clock, since dinner was neglected.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

‘OUR DOUBTS ARE TRAITORS.’

MICHAEL was mistaken; she had glanced back several times, but she could do that without raising her head. The sight of the sad, motionless figure watching her as she passed away from him—was it to be for ever?—and the remembrance of the old man so near his end, who was crying to her to complete the hope of his life, made her heart ache. How fast the horse was going! how quickly Michael and the house had disappeared! She strained her eyes to catch glimpses of the farm buildings as she was being whirled along the road, as if she would never see them again. She did not reply to Walton’s observations, for she had not heard them.

She had fallen into a dreamy, dazed condition of mind. It was all so strange. She had often quarrelled with Michael before, and they had parted in anger; but it was quite different just now, for they had parted in sorrow, as if reconciliation were impossible. And to what was it all due? To Walton in the first instance, it seemed; to her own impetuosity in the second. She had read in legends of agreeable demons who had carried off silly damsels to destruction, having obtained power over them through their vanity or other weakness. In this half-dream Walton was the agreeable fiend, and Bones, trotting behind, with his black eye and grinning white teeth, was invested with all the qualities of an attendant imp ready to do the behest of his wicked master.

She smiled at the fantasy, and looking up saw that they had entered the Earl’s Park, and Walton was driving so quietly now that the deer were scarcely disturbed; the greater number of them did not observe the passers, a few turned timid eyes upon them, and one royal stag with antlers high in the air trotted off towards the dell, but leisurely, as if conscious of his immunity. The warmth of the afternoon sun rendered the shade of the dense foliage of the beeches, limes, and oaks which lined the avenue on either side, very grateful to the occupants of the wagonette.

‘We may as well take it quietly here,’ said Walton, turning towards her, ‘so that you may have time to make up your mind as to what you are going to do. I thought you would like to come this way, as it is quieter than the high road.’

'That was considerate, thank you. I am afraid I have been very stupid during the last half-hour.'

'You can't help being upset, I know; but I hope you are not angry with me.'

He had restrained Jim's pace to a walk.

'No, Mr. Walton, please do not think that. You did what you believed to be a service to me, and I am obliged to you. I am only angry with myself for acting so hastily. I ought to have given Michael some warning that I was coming to ask him about the money. He meant kindly; he wanted to save me from worry, and I took him unfairly by surprise in pouncing upon him the way I did to-day. He asked me to trust him, too, and by-and-by he would explain everything; but I was impatient and would not wait. Do you think you could forgive me if I treated you so badly?'

'Oh, I could forgive you anything; I doubt if Hazell could.' Walton did not at all relish the way in which she was exaggerating her own offence and condoning Michael's conduct; and so he went on: 'He is the most stubborn mule of a fellow I ever came across. If there was anything to tell us which we did not already know, he could have told it, and saved the bother of applying to Patchett. If there was nothing, he could easily have said so.'

'But he said to me, *Wait*; he may have reasons—and if he has, I am sure they are kindly ones—for wishing to say nothing more at present.'

Walton pulled up the horse with a jerk; and the halt was made under the shadow of a broad-spreading cedar whose dark-green shelves formed a delightful roof, protecting those underneath from every ray of the sun.

'Then, why do you not wait? Why go on to Patchett when you still desire to believe that Hazell is acting rightly in this matter?'

'You said that he was right.'

'And so he was and is. The matter is quite simple, and I give him all credit for the good-nature which prompted him to take this course. He says you have lost nothing, because he believes that you will become his wife, and then his fortune will make up for yours. It is a trick; he knows that it is so, and that is why he is shy of speaking out; that is why I said he had left out the *if*. What he means is, that if you take him you will be all right. He persuades himself, I have not the least doubt, that under these conditions he is perfectly justified in saying that your losses are of small importance.'

ing, and such a course of conduct would be
art. She could not believe him capable

of it; yet it was all so plausible, and Walton was evidently so straightforward in what he said and did, that the balance of proof certainly weighed in favour of his suggestion. It was natural enough that Michael should even regard their marriage as a complete settlement of the difficulty. She had never given him authority to hold her as engaged to him; he had never pretended to that position, although Job had all along insisted upon it. On her guardian's account, she had during the last few weeks made no deliberate protest against his continual cry for the marriage; and probably Michael thought that her submission in this respect meant more than she intended. And yet, did she not intend him to believe that by-and-by she would consent? She did not know: the recollection of him standing looking after her as his rival drove her away, made her sensible that parting with him would cost her more than she had hitherto imagined.

'We had better go on now,' she said after a long pause; 'I must see Mr. Patchett.'

'We shall start at once, but, before we start, am I to have no word of hope? I do think you would have preferred to remain in your fool's paradise, Polly, and that you are vexed with me for having roused you from it.'

'No, you have done what was your duty if you think of me as a friend; you have enabled me to discover my real position. I am grateful to you for that, although I am sorry that there should be occasion for it. I have a sincere feeling of friendship for you, Mr. Walton, and I speak as frankly as I can. If my friendship is of any value in your eyes, you will drive on at once without asking me to say more.'

Jim was off at a gallop almost before she had done speaking, and the trees flew past her like the changing figures in a rapidly turned kaleidoscope. Walton's lips were tightly closed and his features hard set: if he had been driving for a wager he could not have given more attention to his horse. He was perfectly honest in his theory of Michael's conduct; only, it had never dawned upon him that he could give up Polly and his fortune too. He had a very fair appreciation of human nature; such a sacrifice as that was a stage beyond his vision.

As he helped Polly to descend at the lawyer's door, he said hurriedly:

'In speaking to Patchett you may as well tell him that my information is derived from the copy of a letter of old Hodsoll's. Patchett can see the copy, but I am unable to tell him whence it comes. My sister gave it to me to use as I pleased, but she refused to tell me under any circumstances where she got it.'

Polly went into the office, where three young men were busily occupied with a sporting paper which was hastily thrown aside on her entrance, and they appeared to be so engrossed in copying sundry legal documents that she obtained no attention until she had spoken twice. Then she was informed that Mr. Patchett had gone to London, and would not return for two days; but if her business were of importance, perhaps she would confer with Mr. Lee. A brief message was sent through a speaking-tube—the young man performed the operation as impressively as possible—and she was conducted to the room of Mr. Patchett's confidential clerk. Mr. Lee was in every respect the reverse of his principal. He was a little, thin man, of about thirty years, with dark hair, mild grey eyes, and white sunken cheeks, suggestive of consumption. He was particular in his dress, very subdued and thoughtful in his manner: he would have made an admirable undertaker, was the first impression produced by his appearance.

He placed a chair for her, and then, resting his elbow on the arms of his own chair, the tips of his fingers met forming an arch, and he waited to learn her business.

'I shall not take up much of your time, Mr. Lee; I wished to ask Mr. Patchett to give me a statement of the amount which I have lost by the failure of the County Bank.'

'Certainly, Miss Holt, in a day or two you can have as correct a statement as we are able to give at present. Mr. Hazell was here a few minutes ago, and informed me that you would call; indeed, he seemed to think that you might have been here before him.'

'Mr. Hazell!' she exclaimed in blank astonishment.

'Yes, I am surprised that you did not meet him: it is not more than ten minutes since he was here. He gave me the same instructions as you have given about the preparation of the accounts, and then he wrote a private letter to Mr. Patchett which we are to send off by this evening's post. I should mention that you are one of our clients to whose affairs Mr. Patchett gives his personal attention.'

'Then you cannot explain to me how I am affected by the failure?'

'I am sorry to be obliged to say I cannot in Mr. Patchett's absence. But so far as I understand it, you are in a very fortunate position compared with that of many of our clients.'

'Will you let me know when Mr. Patchett returns as soon as you can?'

'You would be certain to find him here at twelve o'clock on Friday. I shall make a memorandum that you are to call on that

day, and should there be any alteration in his plans I will inform you.'

She thanked him, and Mr. Lee solemnly bowed her out.

She had not gained much satisfaction so far, but she was struck by the information that Mr. Lee considered her fortunate compared with other clients, and that Michael had been there before her. He must have ridden hard to accomplish that, notwithstanding the delay in the Earl's Park; and his doing so was a curious circumstance in itself; it suggested that he had some reason for desiring to forestall her interview with the lawyer.

As they drove along she told Walton no more than that Patchett was from home, and she could not see him until Friday. But she was haunted all the way by thoughts of Michael's strange conduct. She was more tired when she reached home than she had been by the hardest day's work she had ever known. Consequently she did not see how pale and nervous Sarah was on their arrival.

Walton had recovered from his chagrin at the answer he had received in the Park, but he excused himself from staying longer than was necessary to allow Jim to be taken out of the wagonette and the saddle put on. Sarah quickly went in search of some one to do this, and found young Carter in the rick-yard. Although she bade him hurry up to the house, she walked very slowly herself. Thus, Polly and Walton were alone in the parlour.

'I shall come on Saturday for your answer, Polly,' he said; 'you will then have seen Patchett and you will have had a night to think over what he says. Surely then you will be able to make up your mind as to what you are to do.'

'I will try,' she answered weariedly, as she took off her hat, and abstractedly smoothed the edges of her hair with her fingers. 'I am so put out by all that has happened since the morning that I am not able to think about anything just now.'

'You want a rest; you will be all right in the morning. Don't worry: whatever you have lost, you are not ruined, and, if you were, the Abbey can always afford bread and cheese.' She was grateful for the genuine affection he displayed; she would have been pained by the consciousness of her own inability to requite it; but in the prospect of bread and cheese and Walton Abbey the figure of Miss Walton appeared, and she almost smiled.

'You are very kind, Mr. Walton, and you make me feel very ungracious; for even if I could have thought of you as you wish me to do, I should say no, and refuse to see you again, should affairs prove to be as you represent them.'

'That is cruel.'

'I mean to be grateful and kind.'

We shall see all about it in the next chapter. There was a gentleness in her manner which was not to be displayed there.

She was glad to be left alone. She had managed to sleep for
using her appetite, and played with the children. She had been
that were the effect of the pain. She had been so ill that she
could not eat, although she had been eating since then.
She took a strong cup of tea and went to bed. She
must have a rest, went up to bed and

gazed by the window. Her chin was pressed on the ledge, and her fingers knuckled, she looked out through the bars of the prison at the setting sun. Her hand was in her pocket, and she had made for them, for the first time in her life, a flat on the window ledge. That Vane had said there was no doubt: that Maudie had been - was beyond question. Then, how was it that such confusion should exist in their minds? The scrap of paper under her hand might be the key to the matter. The writing was perfectly plain, but the paper had been so faint, and not one sentence was complete.

thing to which his father consented without approving of it, only in the belief that the marriage would soon be an accomplished fact. If she did not marry him, then Uncle Job wished to know the particulars about some investment, so that she might be in a position to do justice to Michael.

How can I do that without knowing what is required of me? asks me to trust him; why can he not trust me?'

He could not find any answer to that very natural question; and lying over those disjointed phrases, which plainly indicated an calamity of some sort, she felt very sick and sore at heart. To-day she would undoubtedly learn enough from Mr. Patchett to rid her; but in the mean while she was to suffer all the pangs of distress consequent upon knowing that there was a serious duty before her, the nature of which she could only vaguely divine. Michael could have relieved her at once by only a few words, and he would not utter them. It was cruel of him: yet he was not indignant, for she knew that his purpose was to spare her pain, and she was sad in remembering the way they had parted.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

ASKING PARDON.

ACCORDING to Michael's view, there was nothing extraordinary in her conduct. As he watched her being driven away by Walton to the place which he had so long dreamed would be her home, he believed that Polly was lost to him. Her action showed that she referred Walton's guidance to his: it showed not only that she would not trust him, but that she distrusted him. Otherwise she would at least have asked him to go with her. Well, as she had made her choice, it could not matter how soon the mystery about the money was revealed, and the revelation would be a relief to him. The secret had become oppressive. He was almost now that he had caused his father to burn the will containing details of the transaction; but he wished her to believe that his action was spontaneous on his father's part, and not the result of arguments and resolute declaration that in any case the money would be restored to her.

He had done no wrong to any one, unless it might be himself: the legacies remained exactly as they were before: it was only out of his own fortune that Polly's losses were to be repaid. He had contributed largely to the accumulation of her father's store by the hard work of his brain and hands; the money which he gave to her had been set aside for him, and he had a right to deal with it as seemed best to him. T

old

'We shall see all about it on Saturday,' he said gaily, for there was a gentleness in her manner towards him she had never displayed before.

She was glad to be left alone. She had laughed at Sarah for losing her appetite, and prayed that she might be saved from love if that were the effect of it; but her own time had come, and she could not eat, although she had tasted nothing since breakfast. She took a strong cup of tea, and, saying that she was so tired she must have a rest, went up to her own room.

Seated by the window, her elbow resting on the ledge, and her cheek on her knuckles, she looked out vacantly, unconscious of the glories of the setting sun. By-and-by she took from her pocket the pipelight she had made for Uncle Job, and slowly unfolded it, pressing it out flat on the window ledge. That Walton had acted honestly there was no doubt: that Michael had done so was beyond question; then, how was it that such confusion should exist in their statements? The scrap of paper under her hand might be the key to the puzzle. The writing was perfectly plain: but the paper had been torn aslant, and not one sentence was complete.

THE
 WILL
 OF
 MICHAEL
 WALTON
 I AM WRITING
 AND WHEN IT HAS BEEN
 REACHED THE INSTRUMENT
 THAT THERE IS NO
 THE MARRIAGE
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She tried to smooth down the ragged edges and to make out the broken words, so that she might obtain some definite idea of what had been the meaning of this passage in the burnt will. That it had important reference to herself was quite clear, but what the reference was she was unable to comprehend further than that there was something in which her guardian expected her to do justice to Michael in the event of her not marrying him.

Then, Michael was concealing something from her: and it was

something to which his father consented without approving of it, and only in the belief that the marriage would soon be an accomplished fact. If she did not marry him, then Uncle Job wished her to know the particulars about some investment, so that she might be in a position to do justice to Michael.

‘How can I do that without knowing what is required of me? He asks me to trust him; why can he not trust me?’

She could not find any answer to that very natural question; and puzzling over those disjointed phrases, which plainly indicated a hidden calamity of some sort, she felt very sick and sore at heart. On Friday she would undoubtedly learn enough from Mr. Patchett to guide her; but in the mean while she was to suffer all the pangs of distress consequent upon knowing that there was a serious difficulty before her, the nature of which she could only vaguely imagine. Michael could have relieved her at once by only a few words, and he would not utter them. It was cruel of him: yet she was not indignant, for she knew that his purpose was to spare her pain, and she was sad in remembering the way they had parted.

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He had done no wrong to any one, unless it might be himself: all the legacies remained exactly as they were before: it was entirely out of his own fortune that Polly’s losses were to be recouped. He had contributed largely to the accumulation of Job’s store by the hard work of his brain and hands; the money which he gave to her had been set aside for him, and he had a *right to deal with it as seemed best to him.* This course would

leave him poor, with the world to begin again, as his father said.

‘I feel that this is right, dad, and I must do it,’ was always the answer; ‘I have youth and strength, and I have no fear of the upshot. At any rate, I would rather give my last sixpence, and take my place in the field as an ordinary labourer, than that anybody should say Job Hazell had not dealt fairly by the girl who had been placed under his care.’

That always touched Job keenly; but even that would not have overcome his craving for the money, if it had not appeared to him that the marriage would make all safe for Michael. Then had come his terrible yearning to see the two wedded at once; oddly combined with his conviction that he was utterly ruined, and his eager desire to work that he might retrieve his losses.

As these symptoms of rapidly failing powers appeared, Michael’s conscience was more and more sharply smitten by the thought of the exaggerations of which he had been guilty in order to persuade his father to adopt his plans, and especially by the concealment of his doubts as to the probability of Polly becoming his wife. He hoped that she would, and by that flattering unction he tried to soothe his troubled conscience; but he suffered terribly during the weeks which followed the failure of the bank and this day on which he had committed something very like a crime. True, she had aided him in the deception, and in so doing had fanned his hope into a flame, for he had not pressed her in any way; he had been even more reserved than usual, and she had not told him that he was wrong in presuming that her desire to humour Uncle Job had nothing to do with him.

And now—? It was all over. There was no further necessity for considering what she might do out of gratitude, no further possibility that such a feeling could make her accept him when she wished to marry somebody else. She had decided, and it was now for him to act promptly, so that she might be spared unnecessary trouble and his father be as little disturbed as possible. Therefore he had saddled his mare and ridden fast to the village, taking the high road, and thus avoiding Polly and Walton, who had gone by the Park. Riding at full gallop, he could have distanced them even if they had not tarried on the way; as it was, he had time to spare.

Patchett being from home, he gave Mr. Lee directions for the preparation of accounts. The private letter to the former contained no higher treason than the assertion that the last-made will had been destroyed by his father in the presence of Miss Holt, and an earnest request that, as the direct evidence of his share in the

arrangement of the transfer of the money from his account to Polly's had been removed, Mr. Patchett would say as little as he could about it to Miss Holt. He (Michael) wished her to believe that the action was entirely his father's. At the same time, Miss Holt was to have all necessary information; his desire being simply that she might be secured from all loss without any sense of obligation to him.

This task accomplished, he endeavoured to force his thoughts back to the common affairs of his daily life. He rode down to the station to enquire about the arrival of a wagon-load of guano and a new reaping machine which, according to the invoices, were due that afternoon. Here he was detained for half-an-hour, and a second time escaped an encounter with Polly and Walton.

On reaching home, Jane Darby, who had been watching for him with much anxiety, told him that 'Master was queerer nor he had ever been yet.'

'In what way, Jane?'

'It's every way. He won't eat nothing, and he's been a-calling for you and for Polly all afternoon since you went out. He won't smoke almost, though he's tried it. Hadn't you best send to the Meadow, for I don't believe anything'll quiet him, barrin' seeing you and she together.'

There were tears in the woman's eyes, and Jane Darby was not much given to the display of emotion. She waited on the threshold when Michael went into the room, and she heard all that passed.

Michael found his father feverishly taking up and laying down his letters and other papers. The dinner-plates were standing untouched at the other end of the table, for Job would only allow the cloth to be spread on one half of it, in order that his desk and papers should remain undisturbed. His eyes were sunken, and there was a peculiar dazed expression in them which the son feared although he did not understand.

'That's you, Michael, lad; finished the home field, I suppose—eh? That new machine's a good un. Told you it was the thing to have—reaping and tedding all in one; capital, eh? . . . Where's Polly? You went out with her a minute ago, didn't you? Ah, and I saw you linking along past the window. Lucky chap! A fine wench—and it'll be all right about the money. She took it quiet, didn't she? Of course, because it makes no difference to her or you either when you're married. Where is she?'

'She'll be here before long, dad—what are you looking for?'

The old man's hands continued nervously the work of lifting

and laying down the papers, every movement more feeble than the one before.

‘It’s dark, ain’t it? Light the lamp.’

‘I’ll fetch it, dad.’

He went out hurriedly. He told the weeping Darby to get the lamp, and then he went in search of two messengers; one man was sent off on the mare to ask the Doctor to come at once, and another was despatched with the dogcart to the Meadow. He helped to saddle the mare, and to harness the horse in the dogcart. Then he wrote in pencil on the inside of an old envelope, ‘Please come with the bearer. My father is calling for you. He is dangerously ill.’

This occupied almost a quarter of an hour, and when he re-entered the room the lamp was burning at full blaze, although it was still daylight, and Darby was holding it up as if to permit Job to see the characters on the paper which he held in his hands. The desk was open, its contents tossed about as if in a hasty search for something; and the hands with the paper had dropped upon the old man’s knees.

The paper was the will, and it was the last page which Job had been reading when his head drooped and his last breath was drawn.

Michael understood it all; and it was only a whisper, but so full of agony:

‘God forgive me! I have killed him.’

(To be continued.)





BELGRAVIA.

AUGUST 1879.

Queen of the Meadow.

BY CHARLES GIBBON.

(The right of translation is reserved.)

CHAPTER XXXV.

THAT TERRIBLE 'IF!'

THE stillness of the place was terrible. To the spellbound man and woman the evensong of the birds seemed to be hushed, and what murmurs of life out of doors reached their ears only intensified the silence in the room.

Job was still drooping over the paper which had revealed to him the treachery of his son; the thin white hair straggled across his brow, and the glazed eyes appeared as if vainly searching for the absent words. Jane Darby held up the blazing lamp, the light of which, struggling with that of the closing day, cast faint shadows on the table and the walls. After that whispered prayer for pardon the heart-stricken son stood like one paralysed: he felt that he had been guilty of parricide.

The intellect, however, was soon painfully active, although the emotions were benumbed, and he roused himself to perform the sad duties necessary in this dark hour. But he acted like one in a dream; his movements were so calm and mechanical that no casual observer would have suspected how his whole nature was being racked. He was tortured by that awful 'If' which enters into the life of everyone with such a huge measure of regrets for what might have been—the possible is always so large, and the good work accomplished so small. 'If' he had done this—'if' he had cut down that—what a difference there would have been now! His father might have been alive. 'If' he could only begin again! What a great portion of our lives is disturbed by lamentations over blunders which, looking bitterly back, we see might have been so easily avoided!

Michael had known that in the course of nature he could not expect his father to live long—that the days, almost the hours, were numbered; he had been warned by many symptoms that the final scene would take place soon. And yet it had come upon him with appalling suddenness and found him quite unprepared. His love had blinded him to the imminence of the event; and in his love he had in a vague way hoped and expected that his father had still years before him, provided he could be kept quiet and saved from every source of disturbance.

How eagerly he had tried to guard him! During this day especially Michael's strength and wit had been taxed to their limits in his endeavour to save him. He had apparently succeeded in averting the explanation which he knew would be most perilous, and in the moment of success this climax of grief fell upon him. Conscience called out 'Guilty,' and he was too feeble in his sorrow to attempt any defence even to himself. His father was dead, and he had killed him. This was the exaggeration of grief, but for the time he could not understand that.

He saw how it had come about. Moved by some fear or suspicion that his wishes were not to be fulfilled, the father had sought comfort in reassuring himself that the statement in the will was perfectly clear, and that Polly must consent to accept Michael. Then he had discovered that he had burned the will containing the explanation; and whether he believed that it had been given to him by mistake or design could never be known now. The shock of anger and sorrow had done its work.

Whilst Darby was pulling down all the blinds Michael carried his father upstairs and laid him on the bed. Then he returned to the parlour to gather up the scattered papers. He carefully folded them one by one and replaced them in the desk, the will uppermost. He learned that his father had thought of death, as on a half-sheet of note-paper was written in his scrawling but laborious penmanship:

'This is what I want put on my stone when the time comes, and I look to my son Michael to see that it is done according to my wishes.'

'Here lies Job Hazell farmer at Marshstead for years. Aged years Peace be with YOU. I go to Peace.'

Job had arranged this epitaph on the afternoon of the last Sunday on which he had been to church, and he had regarded it in secret as a of composition. Odd as it was, Michael resolved to cut on the stone as it had been written, with punctuation and the filling-up of the or the occupation of the farm, and

seventy-five for the age. Was there nothing else he could do to please him? Now that he had gone away, the son remembered so many neglected opportunities of giving him pleasure; many trifling items of disobedience rose up like accusing ghosts; but the great wrong he had done this day transcended all others in its results and in his remorse.

For himself he had no pity: a dull aching cry was in his brain—‘There can be no atonement now.’ He was afraid to think of Polly, and yet the dear face was always before him. It was his love for her that had tempted him; and believing that she had accepted Walton, he feared to be unjust to her in these first moments of his anguish. He covered his eyes with his hands, trying to shut her out altogether from his thoughts. She who had been more to him than all the world, for whom he had been ready to sacrifice home and fortune, had proved his evil genius and made him a criminal.

Polly was still in her own room puzzling over that fragment of the burnt will, when the messenger arrived with Michael’s startling summons. There was some strange association in her mind between the fragment of the will and the message which distressed her, because she found it impossible to make out exactly what it was—like a name or a face which haunts the memory but will not take definite form.

She rose at once in obedience to the call, eager to comfort uncle Job and, if it might be, to relieve Michael of some of the cares inevitable in such a calamity as seemed to be close at hand.

‘Put on your hat and come with me,’ she said hastily to Sarah, who was at the foot of the stairs; ‘we shall very likely both be wanted.’

‘Is he so very ill?’

‘Michael says dangerously ill, and he is not likely to say that without good reason; and, besides, things have happened to-day which may have upset uncle; and poor Michael, I don’t know what we can do for him. Be quick.’

She found him at the door waiting for her: so white and haggard that she scarcely recognised in him the fresh, strong man she had known barely a month ago.

‘I knew you would come,’ he said gently; ‘but it is too late.’

Then Polly with her two hands took one of his very gently, and all that she could say was:

‘Oh, Michael!’

Sarah, when she heard the fatal words ‘too late,’ held back, watching the two mourners with sympathy and pity. But there

was something else in her expression—a speculation which had nothing to do with them.

They could not speak any more at present: there seemed to be nothing more for them to say. Michael took the two ladies into the house; and it was with a feeling of inexpressible awe that Polly stood in the room where only a few hours ago she had been talking with her guardian, and now looked at the empty chair which he would never occupy again. She wondered how it was that Michael could be so quiet, and that she herself was incapable of making any sign of the sorrow she felt. What seemed most strange was that the dreaded event had actually occurred and they stood there so calm, so helpless. All the kindness of the old man was flickering through her mind and filling her eyes with tears. The sharp edges of his character had disappeared, and the petty weaknesses, at which she had so often laughed whilst pretending not to see them, were forgotten. To those who love the dead one the mirror of memory reflects only the most pleasing features of the life.

It was her first real experience of death; for she could scarcely remember her mother, and when her father died she was still too young for her emotions to be deeply impressed. She had cried a great deal and felt greatly afflicted; but every day brought some new object of interest to occupy her mind, and the sense of loss soon passed away, leaving only an occasional touch of pain—not envious, only regretful—when she saw other girls with loving parents at hand to advise and guide them. Uncle Job, however, had filled the place of a father; and now when he was taken away she was a woman with many vivid memories of his goodness and forbearance; and, with the eccentricity of grief, she found pleasure in thinking even of his scoldings. He had gone away, and there were no more marked symptoms of sorrow than were supplied by Michael's great reserve and gentleness, by the white faces and the hushed voices. There were no wild outbursts of excitement, no outcries of agony such as she had read of in books. Everything was done calmly and in order.

Dr. Humphreys arrived, and Michael was called away to see him, just as Polly had said:

‘Is there *nothing* I can do, Michael?’

And he could only answer, ‘Nothing now.’

The Doctor was not surprised to learn that he could render no further service to his patient. He went through the formality of making the usual examination, and announcing the fact of which everybody was aware, that life was extinct. But Dr. Humphreys *was more than a faithful and experienced medical adviser: he was*

the friend of his patients and their families. So, looking at Michael, he offered him friendly counsel which his professional genius enabled him to see was needed.

'Take care of yourself, Hazell; eat as much as you can, and sleep as much as you can. I don't want to have you on my hands. You have got this to bear, and you will bear it best if you will force yourself to go on with the ordinary duties of life. You cannot do him any good by knocking yourself up.'

Michael was unable to tell the Doctor how he valued his sympathy, but he promised to try to obey him. He could not explain the heavy weight which lay upon his conscience—the conviction that it was his act which had brought about this calamity! But the idea was always present to him, making him morbid in his views of others as well as of himself. Oh, that terrible 'If!'

CHAPTER XXXVI.

'QUITE SURE—TOO LATE.'

ALTHOUGH he had said there was nothing for Polly to do now, the answer referred rather to the position in which they had been placed in regard to his father than to the practical domestic arrangements which had to be made for the funeral. In these matters both Polly and Sarah gave active assistance to Darby, and there were many details to occupy them during the few days which intervened.

The ceremony was to take place on Monday, and Michael performed his part in all that had to be done with a degree of outward calmness which caused everyone to remark how well he bore his loss. He wrote letters to his brothers and sisters, and all the invitations to the funeral were addressed by himself. He went about the work in the fields, in the barn and stables, much as usual. He was obeying good Dr. Humphreys' directions, and he felt that his only safety from an utter break-down lay in persistent application to work, work, work.

The people only observed that the bright, healthy expression of his face, the pleasant smile and the hearty laugh, were gone.

'But they'll all come back,' was the hopeful view which one of the harvesters proclaimed to his comrades. 'He'll be down in the mouth for a bit, but he'll pick up in time and get a wife.'

'Lord help him if he tries to get out of it that way,' exclaimed a ruddy-faced fellow, who looked as if he had never known a care in the world. 'I've been married twice.'

'But you shan't have a third chance, Ben,' retorted his wife, who was behind him, as he knew, and who looked as ruddily good-natured as her husband.

‘Not if you can help it, old woman; but there’s no saying what may come about.’

The group of harvesters enjoyed the passage at arms which followed between the man and wife, who were known to be as contented a couple as could be found in the county.

Jane Darby took a gloomy view of the case, and to Zachy Rowe, who was delivering letters of condolence, she gave her confidence.

‘It ain’t natural to see him as he is; he’s just like a sick lamb, and the more people worry him the gentler he grows. There ain’t no life in him. I can’t abear to see him, when people are blundering and taking advantage of him, speaking as mild as if it was him that was in fault, and not them. I say it ain’t natural; but the Lord’s will be done.’

Zachy shook his head wisely.

‘Human nature’s a queer business, taken altogether and anyhow you look at it, Missus Darby. I know a lot of it—specially what’s situated ten miles round Dunthorpe. A man like me, that’s been going the round for ages and has eyes to see, sees a deal more nor people suppose. I can tell as easy as if I read it when a girl gets a love-letter. There ain’t no waiting at the door: it bangs open afore I get up to it, and there she is pretending that it was accident and she was just going out for a walk. I know when it’s an account, for there ain’t no hurry about them; no more there is about funerals. I see a letter and I see a face, and then I know whether it’s good or bad news. There’s som’at else in Master Michael’s trouble nor the old man going off sudden. That was to be expected, and needn’t have knocked him down so awful. Ain’t there something else?’

‘I don’t know of anything.’

‘Then I do.’ And Zachy was as proud of his superior knowledge as Darby was anxious to learn what it was; but he did not give his confidence without some token of flattery and pressure.

‘You are a cute chap, Mr. Rowe, and clever at making out things. I wish you could help me to find out where Master Michael is hurt, for maybe then I could do something to help him.’

‘Well, I don’t like carrying tales about, but when *you* ask me quite confidential like I don’t mind giving you a hint.’

‘That’s real kind of you, for you know that it would be a comfort to me to do something for him, poor dear.’

‘Then, they do say everywhere,’ began Zachy, in a solemn whisper, ‘that he and the missus of the Meadow *ought* to come *toget*’ ‘I say nothing, but there was rare talk about him stay-

ing in the house that night, owing to them tramps—a lark, weren't it? But now all the saying is that she has given him the slip and is going to take up with young Master Walton of the Abbey, and that's what's making Master Hazell so queer.'

'Maybe she is, and a fool she'll be if she do, supposing she has the chance of choosing,' exclaimed Darby warmly. She had been so long associated with the family that she entirely identified herself with its good and ill repute, and the supposed slight upon Michael roused her pride beyond the discretion she had been observing in order to learn all her gossip had to tell. 'But Master Michael ain't such a fool as to break his heart about any woman as ever lived.'

'Man is always a fool when he meddles with woman—axing pardon, Missus Darby, for saying that to you. I have heard of men as have made away with themselves on account of a wench. Hope it won't be so with Master Hazell—but there's no saying. Ah, what wimen is!'

With that general exclamation Zachy trotted off to carry the news of Michael's strange way to the next gossip, embellished with his own interpretations.

Polly wrote to Patchett that she would postpone her visit to him until after the funeral, as she was not at present in a mood to transact business. She wrote on the Wednesday night, immediately after getting home from Marshstead, and when the note was despatched next morning she felt as if a load had been lifted from her shoulders. She was glad to have at least four clear days' respite from the revelations which Michael had so resolutely endeavoured to keep from her.

'He has done no wrong,' she was constantly saying; 'I am confident of that.' And yet those broken phrases of that scrap of the burned will were always haunting her with new suggestions as to their meaning. What troubled her most was the plain direction—she did not think of it as an appeal—that she was to do him justice in something about which she was still ignorant. She wanted to know what it was, for she was eager to do him justice in every way that was in her power. The eagerness increased every day as she unavoidably saw more and more of the harassed and quiet face. What would she not do to see him looking bright and happy again!

She was full of the tenderest feelings towards him. Job's death had brought back with vivid sympathy the recollections of her childhood and quick passage into womanhood, Michael being always the central figure in these dear memories as her playmate,

protector, and lover. She repented all the pain she had caused him, although she consoled herself with the reflection that she could not help it; she *could* not have agreed to become his wife until she felt sure that something more than the affection begot of long association, or of a sympathetic impulse, prompted her consent. She was quite satisfied that she would still have said 'No,' even if Walton had not existed.

In his manner towards her Michael was strangely shy, if not cold. They were compelled to meet often, and with all his gentleness she fancied that he shrank from her, and took every possible means of avoiding being alone with her, short of absolutely running away. He was afraid to be alone with her, but not, as was imagined, because she had vexed him: it was because he loved her so.

On Saturday Walton was at the Meadow, as he had promised to be; but he found Polly and Sarah absent, the first being at Marshstead, and the second away to the village. He was not afraid to go to Hazell's place, but death was always unpleasant to him, and he thought that he would rather wait than go there at present.

'The old chap going off in this way will be so much in young Hazell's favour,' was his reflection. 'There will be all sorts of sentimental thoughts in her head, and she will give in to anything he proposes. Just my luck.'

He went to Elizabeth House and played billiards. Mentally he staked the success or failure of his suit on the first game. He won, and he continued to play with great spirit throughout the afternoon. His opponents one after another were astounded by his 'flukes.' He was in high glee, for he had gained in his imagination much more than they guessed.

After service on Sunday Polly again went to Marshstead, to see that all the arrangements for the next day were quite completed. Darby was standing at the top of the long lane, shading her eyes from the bright sun, and apparently on the outlook for some one. As soon as she saw Polly approaching she advanced to meet her; and the good woman was doing her best to subdue a fit of crying.

'I was waiting for you, miss,' she began eagerly when they were still two yards apart; 'there's something more than ordinary the matter with Master Michael; he hasn't taken bite nor sup this blessed day. Everybody's out to church, and there's nobody in the house but him and me.'

Here Darby sobbed like a child frightened by darkness.

'What is it, Jane?' inquired Polly in alarm.

'I don't know, miss, and that's what fears me. He went about
the p^l morning with his head down and looking as old and

bent-like as him as is lying up there. I don't believe he's had his clothes off the whole night.'

That was a degree of grief which she could not understand; for Darby had a very sensible theory that eating and sleeping were essential to a sound condition of mind and body.

'What has he done?'

'He just came in, white as a ghost, and though I was standing at the kitchen-door, to tell him breakfast was ready, he went by like a blind man, and straight up stairs into the room. I heard him walking about and walking about, and all of a sudden he was quiet. I was more scared by that than by his walking about. There hasn't been a sound for more than an hour, and it's been awful. I listened at the door, miss—I couldn't help it—and there wasn't as much as the sound of a breath. By'nby I tapped at the door, for I couldn't stand it any longer; but he never answered. After a while I thought that if there was anything would make him speak it would be your name; and I tapped again, asking if you was coming to dinner; but even that didn't get a word from him. I didn't feel able to go in by myself, and I've been waiting for you to go and see what's wrong. Oh, miss! I hope it's nothing.'

Polly was pale, and quickened her steps to the house. She knocked at the bedroom door. No answer. She turned the handle and entered the darkened room. Passing so rapidly from the sunlight, her eyes were somewhat dazed, and she had to halt a moment, in order to become accustomed to the sort of summer twilight into which the thick brown-holland blinds had transformed the brilliance of noon.

It was Polly who had arranged the apartment, and she had tried to rob death of some of its gloom by placing sweet-smelling flowers on the table, the mantelpiece, the bed, and the coffin. This had been her daily task, and she had found a sad interest in performing it; for, after the first shock of surprise and grief, she felt a satisfaction in being with Uncle Job and doing something, however trifling, for his sake. He was sleeping so calmly, and looked so much younger than when she had last seen him in life, that she lingered near him and kissed the cold lips and brow, from which the wrinkles of time and care had been all smoothed away.

Presently she was able to distinguish objects, and she saw Michael kneeling by his father's head, and so still that he seemed to be in a trance. Her touch roused him, and he looked up with vacant eyes, in which intelligence slowly dawned. He rose *weariedly*.

'It's you, Polly,' he said softly as he covered the face. 'I did not hear you come in: I was thinking about *him*, and was not minding about anything else. I hope he can see us standing beside him—he would like that. He was very fond of you.'

'I know it, Michael, and it will always be a sad thought to me that I caused him some disappointment.'

'Don't think of that. He saw you passing the window, and his last words about you were very happy ones. If he had not——'

Michael could not complete the sentence—'if he had not looked at the will he would have died contented.' The thought that he had died in anger and disappointment arrested the man's tongue. He bowed his head as if looking at the hidden face, and relapsed into the trance from which he had been for a moment aroused.

'You have given me good news,' she said, placing her hand in his as she had often done in childhood. 'You could not have told me anything more pleasant than that his last thoughts of me were kindly ones, for I have been wretched thinking of how I deceived him—— You are not well, Michael!'

He had drawn such a quick breath, like a sob, when she uttered the words 'deceived him,' that she could not help observing it.

'I shall be better by and by,' he answered in an undertone, and without lifting his head.

'Not so long as you stay here brooding over our loss. Do come down-stairs with me.'

The tender tone and the touch of her hand resting in his quickened his dulled senses. Suddenly his hand closed on hers; he looked into her clear eyes with all the old yearning but none of the hope, and a startled flush suffused her cheeks.

'Do you know what you are doing when you speak that way, Polly? You are reviving hopes which were as dear to him almost as to myself. You are tempting me to tell you things which I desired that you should never know. Give me peace—do not tempt me to say any more, for it was I who deceived him, not you; and all the shame and guilt of doing so press on me very heavily now that I can make no atonement to him.'

He had broken down: the passion of grief which he had hitherto succeeded in hiding from others' eyes found vent at last; and although he spoke in a low, tremulous voice, there was a ring in it like a cry of despair.

She was frightened and bewildered with still only a vague sense of the source of all this anguish, and so, timidly:

'Tell me, Michael, what I can do.'

'There is nothing you can do now, Polly. I told you that *before*. You have made your choice; I hope you will be happy,

and I would like to help to make you happy. You know what *he* wished, and we know that it can never be realised.'

'I do not know that.'

He stared at her in amazement, and then a light seemed to flash upon him.

'You are very good, Polly; but at this moment we are both excited, and your good-nature is ready to promise more than your love could fulfil. We are still in his presence: let me relieve you at once. Even if you were now ready to obey his wishes, I should feel bound to say that I cannot accept the sacrifice.'

'What if it be no sacrifice?' And the flush deepened on her cheeks, whilst the eyes rested upon him with the timid, trustful look of a fawn.

There was agony in the man's face; he made a quick movement as if about to take her in his arms; then, by a strong effort checking the impulse, he smiled sadly at his own folly.

'No, no, it is too late; even if you could give me what I have been yearning for so long, to know it now would add more pain to what I have already to bear. It is too late. I am not worthy. I have deceived my father, and it was the discovery of my falsehood that killed him.'

'You are unjust to yourself, Michael,' she said quickly. 'We knew, and he knew, that he had not long to live—he told me so. Whatever you may have done to vex him, you are blaming yourself too much.'

It was sweet to hear her voice defending him against himself; it was like a cooling draught to one feverish and parched.

'I have tried hard to comfort myself by that thought. I knelt beside him and prayed to be forgiven, and then all the pitiful excuses that could be urged in my favour only showed me the more clearly that I had been prompted by selfishness and pride, and not by my love for you and for him, which I had consoled myself in thinking was the only motive of my conduct. God knows I did believe at the time that I was doing right.'

'Then you are not doing right now, Michael, in torturing yourself by useless regrets.'

He instantly became calm. Throughout the conversation he had shown glimpses of emotion which he had again and again controlled; and his power over himself had been almost overthrown when she had suggested that she might marry him without any sacrifice. The remembrance of her driving away with Walton restored him. She was in her pity ready to say anything to give him relief; but having risked so much for her happiness, he would not endanger it by taking advantage of her present mood. There-

fore, when she had almost offered herself, he turned away from the prize which his heart was yearning for. And now her tender reproach seemed to recall him from a cloud of bitter reflections.

‘That is true, Polly; regrets are always useless; but you are the only one who has seen me so low down as this, and I am not sorry, for it has been a relief to me to tell you my thoughts. It will explain to you anything queer in my ways which may have disturbed you, and you will not doubt that I shall do everything I can to fill his place in all that concerns you until—until you are married. We will go down-stairs now.’

The reference to the event which would terminate his service recalled the scene in the garden. She had said many bitter things to him then, and they were all the more bitter because they were uttered in the presence of his successful rival—for he had no doubt that Walton had been successful. Although she had not absolutely declared her decision in words, she had done so in acts which bore only the one construction—that she had accepted him. There was no petty anger in the man’s heart, no jealousy even; for the combination of his evil stars seemed to him at this moment so overwhelming that he accepted the position with the resignation which is born of despair. It was of no avail to continue the struggle; he was beaten, and he must endure his defeat quietly. It did appear to him that he might even yet have won her hand if he could have been unscrupulous enough to take advantage of her pity. More than once the temptation had proved almost too much for him; but he had resisted it.

The sudden change in his manner was more distressing to her than his morbid self-accusations; these might be reasoned away, and she had fancied for a little while that her efforts to do so were succeeding. But the fancy was dispelled by this resumption of sad reserve, in which he seemed to hug his misery and to forbid anyone to interfere. The humour was beyond her comprehension, and apparently beyond the power of her affection to overcome.

She had followed him to the door; but on the threshold she paused and impulsively returned to take a last look at Uncle Job, who had grown so inexpressibly dearer to her now that he had passed away than he had ever seemed to be before. As she gazed at the cold face she silently prayed that his spirit would direct her how to accomplish that act of justice to his son which she knew he had called on her to perform.

Michael did not look back, and yet he understood all that was passing: her love for his father formed one of the strongest links in the chain which bound him to her, whilst it added another sharp sting to the knowledge that he had lost her.





'She turned to him a clear, frank face!'

When she came forth he closed the door and followed her down-stairs.

‘We will go outside,’ she said, like one half-suffocated and craving for fresh air.

Whithersoever she might lead he would follow. With eyes fixed straight before her she moved towards the bower. As she walked, and without looking at him, she said in a subdued tone—he did not observe how nervous she was:

‘Are you quite sure, Michael, that you understood what I meant when you told me a few minutes ago that—that it was too late?’

‘Quite sure,’ he answered, with tremulous hesitation in his voice and a bewilderment of speculations in his brain. Before he could reduce the speculations to form she turned to him a clear, frank face in which he imagined there was an expression of relief.

‘So be it, Michael; and now that we quite understand each other there can no longer be any doubts or hesitation between us, such as there have been whilst it was uncertain what relations we were to hold to each other. Now I shall be able to speak to you as to a dear brother in whose judgment I trust and to whom I can give my full confidence. And you will speak to me in the same way, I hope—tell me when you think I am doing wrong, and scold me if I am disobedient—just as Uncle Job used to do?’

‘I will try.’

He saw how pleased she was that there should be no more doubts as to their future relationship; the position being definitely settled, they would be at perfect ease in their intercourse, and he was glad that he had answered as he had done.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

ALL OVER.

THE glare of the sun on the grey roads and yellow fields was trying to the eyes; the hedgerows, the trees, and the meadows afforded little relief, for these were more grey than green in the scorching light and under their coatings of dust. There were shady nooks under the trees by the river, where the long damp grass tempted every passer-by to lie down and rest. The stillness of the atmosphere was equally trying to the lungs, and the crowds of farmers who came from far and near to pay the last tribute of respect to Job Hazell were gasping for breath and solemnly mopping their heads with handkerchiefs. Job had been a favourite throughout the county. He had always been one of the first to see the value of new agricultural improvements and to adopt

them; and he had been always ready to give his neighbours the benefit of his experience in the many experiments he made. So the gathering was a large one, and every kind of vehicle seemed to have been pressed into service for the funeral, and every farmer in the county attended, although it was the middle of harvest and time was precious.

Sir Montague Lewis was one of the first to arrive at Marshstead and to offer his condolences to the son, expressing at the same time his hope that the farm would continue in Michael's hands and to prosper in them as it had done in his father's. Michael was grateful for this token of the esteem in which his father had been held; he was greedy to hear every word of praise and to see every sign of approval of the dead man's life: he sought in them consolation for his own backsliding.

The messages to his brothers in America and Australia were still on their way. His third brother, John (a shrewd man of business), arrived from London by the forenoon train, and intended to return to town in the evening. Only one of his sisters was with him, Mrs. Dillthwaite, the wife of a Halifax cotton-spinner; the other sister had married a grain merchant, and was settled in St. Petersburg.

The procession was a long one, and the whole village appeared to have turned out to witness the spectacle. The church and churchyard were crowded, and whatever comfort there may be to the survivor in knowing that the dear one who is gone is greatly lamented was afforded to Michael. Mr. Arnold himself, feeble as he was and so conscious that his own time was at hand, read the service; and then dust was returned to dust and it was all over.

The crowd slowly dispersed, and only a few immediate friends, including Mr. Patchett, went back to Marshstead. Polly and Sarah were there, with Mrs. Dillthwaite, assisting Jane Darby in providing refreshments for the visitors—a matter of importance in the country, on account of the distance some of them had to travel. Our funerals do not interfere with our friends' appetites, however much they respect us.

Mr. Patchett thought it desirable to go through the formality of reading the will, and the company assembled in the parlour. Michael calmly placed his father's desk on the table and gave the key to the lawyer. The latter turned over the pages of the will before beginning to read it out, and his audience waited patiently, for there were no expectant heirs to be disappointed.

'Although it is of no consequence,' said Mr. Patchett, smoothly—
in pages, 'I may as well mention that our friend the late

Mr. Hazell made another will after this one, but he destroyed it in the presence of his son Michael and Miss Holt.'

'Yes,' said Polly as the lawyer looked towards her as if seeking confirmation; and she cast a startled glance at Michael, who was seated in his father's big chair, his brow resting on his hand, so that his face was almost covered.

'He burned the second will,' Patchett went on, 'but I drew them both up, and I know that the bequests in both were exactly the same. The only difference was that in the second will he explained why it was that he was unable to leave so much to his son Michael as he had hoped to do. I believe he had an idea that he would most likely destroy the second will, for when I informed him that it would be quite sufficient to add his explanation to this one, he insisted upon having another copy made. I think he did right in destroying it, for the explanation referred to would have caused unnecessary pain to some of his survivors, and I am sure he did not wish to do that.'

The lawyer was good-naturedly trying to make matters smooth for Michael, but his words, considered with those broken sentences on the scrap of paper in her possession, started many questions in Polly's mind.

Patchett then read the will, and there was no sign of disappointment on the faces of any of those present. John Hazell and his sister, Mrs. Dillthwaite, had long known that they had received the whole of their patrimony, and they were satisfied with the small additions now made to it; but they were both greatly surprised to learn that, beyond the stock of the farm and the lease, Michael received only five hundred pounds. The sum was not stated in the will; it was Mr. Patchett who mentioned the amount as the total which the estate would yield to the residuary legatee.

'How can this be?' exclaimed brother John, as soon as he had an opportunity of speaking in private. 'We all thought you had double as much as any of us, and here you are with only enough to carry on the farm.'

'But I have the farm and the stock. I am content with my share,' answered Michael.

The brother saw that he was evading the question; and he saw, too, that the man was suffering from some other source of grief than that of the loss of his father.

'Of course, if you are content we have nothing more to say; but as I mean to help you if you get into any strait, I would be better pleased if you would tell me at once how you stand.'

IN THE MEADOW.

'Don't trouble yourself about me,' answered

'that way I won't press you to explain
that you and father have been spec-

'—talking—and I have lost.'

'I see at once. That makes all clear; but
the old man, if he knew that he had
passed to the rest of us, when you had been

'was hard upon him; but he did what
has given me more happiness in this way
of a million, and he knew it. As things
well off.'

'We content we have nothing to complain
has been a satisfaction to know how things

'the bank failed,' answered Michael awk-

'I understood that father had not much a
must have been a regular downer to leave

'as you call it; and if downer means an utter
wages of a man's life, then it expresses me

'looked him with keen but kindly eyes, and

'telling in it you don't want to tell.'

'In a low voice, as he passed his hand over
only myself. I shall tell you soon

'I press you, although I believe it would
work out. However, please yourself :
please me so far as to answer this—can

'to know that there is no use talking
his watch in his pocket. 'I have just
my train. Remember this, Michael—
helped to give me a good start in life
just you knock at my door and see

'hands. To say 'Thank you' in the right
easiest and is one of the most difficu-

things to do ; as a rule, the man who is the most deeply grateful is the most awkward in saying so. The spell of the golden silence always lays hold of the tongue of emotion.

‘I have no fear that I shall be all right by and by, John ; but, if any trouble does come, I shall count on you and seek your help. You can take that promise as my heartiest thanks, or as a sign that you should take back your offer.’

‘What the devil *is* the matter, Michael?’ exclaimed the brother, astounded by the reply, and still more by the manner in which it was uttered. Then a flash of light illumed his shrewd face, and, still holding Michael’s hand, he added sympathetically—‘It’s Polly ! I did think there was something queer between you—you were so awfully polite to her. But it will come all right—it can’t be more than a tiff, and that won’t hurt either of you. After you’re married you will get used to that sort of thing.’

Michael did not attempt to enlighten his brother ; he could not have done so without saying that Polly was about to marry Walton, and until she made the announcement herself he felt bound to hold his tongue. His conviction that the event would be very soon generally known helped him to keep silent. Practical John was so well pleased by his own acuteness in having discovered the cause of all Michael’s strange conduct that he went off to the train quite at ease in mind so far as his brother was concerned.

Michael preserved a calmness of demeanour which relieved outsiders from any tax upon their sympathy : it was inexplicable to the inner circle composed of those who *wished* to sympathise with him and to try to make his sorrow less. His sister was disappointed, if not vexed, by his conduct, although she was glad that there were no ‘scenes.’ But the kindest nature is so perverse that when it meets this calm spirit of endurance, it grumbles at not being allowed to say ‘I grieve with you.’ He did not please his sister, and only an accident satisfied his brother.

Polly understood the position better than the brother and sister, and was therefore less pained by his apparently obstinate coldness, whilst she admired his strength. She was quite sensible that it is the weak man who whines and makes a fuss in time of trouble—sometimes such a fuss that even his truest friends are inclined to regard him with feelings more akin to contempt than to pity. He cries out as if nobody but himself had ever lost anything, and as if Providence had been peculiarly unkind to him. It is himself he is unconsciously thinking about all the time. Sorrow which seeks relief in making others miserable, or, worse

‘Quite safe — don’t trouble yourself about me,’ answered Michael hastily.

‘Very well, if you take it that way I won’t press you to explain. But I cannot help thinking that you and father have been speculating.’

‘Yes, I have been speculating—and I have lost.’

‘You might have said so at once. That makes all clear; but it must have been hard on the old man, if he knew that he had to leave you so little compared to the rest of us, when you had been working with him so long.’

‘He knew, and it was hard upon him; but he did what I wanted him to do. He has given me more happiness in this way than if he had left me a million, and he knew it. As things stand I think myself very well off.’

‘Of course, if you are content we have nothing to complain about; but it would have been a satisfaction to know how things came to be so bad.’

‘You know that the bank failed,’ answered Michael awkwardly.

‘Yes, but I always understood that father had not much at stake there, and the loss must have been a regular downer to leave you so low.’

‘It was a downer, as you call it; and if downer means an utter break-up of the dearest hopes of a man’s life, then it expresses my position.’

Brother John examined him with keen but kindly eyes, and then looked at his watch.

‘I see there is something in it you don’t want to tell.’

‘Yes,’ was the reply, in a low voice, as he passed his hand over his brow, ‘but it concerns only myself. I shall tell you some day, but not now.’

‘Very well, I shall not press you, although I believe it would be better for you to speak out. However, please yourself in regard to that, and just please me so far as to answer this—can I not help you in any way?’

‘You cannot.’

‘Well, it’s some comfort to know that there is no use talking,’ said the brother, replacing his watch in his pocket. ‘I have just comfortable time to catch my train. Remember this, Michael—I remember that your work helped to give me a good start in life, and when you are in a corner just you knock at my door and see what will happen.’

The brothers grasped hands. To say ‘Thank you’ in the right way seems one of the simplest and is one of the most difficult

things to do ; as a rule, the man who is the most deeply grateful is the most awkward in saying so. The spell of the golden silence always lays hold of the tongue of emotion.

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still, in casting blame on others, is the most irritating phase of selfishness.

Michael tried to put Self aside altogether—tried to find the best way to fulfil the wishes of his father, and to do his duty to all around him.

‘You are so very quiet, Michael,’ said Polly as she was going away—and there was tenderness, almost a tremor, in her voice—‘that I am afraid you are not pleased with me.’

‘You have been very kind, Polly,’ he said, grasping her hand warmly; and then, checked by the thought that she belonged to another, relaxing the grasp—but softly, as if he feared that she should know the bitterness of the thought that passed through his mind. ‘You have done everything that a devoted daughter and sister could have done at such a time, and I am sorry that I have not been able to show you how grateful I am.’

‘It is not that—I know you are pleased to have me here and to find me trying to help you; but you are so changed in yourself!’

He gently released her hand; his eyes could not meet hers; and he had to struggle for the reply, although when it came it was commonplace enough—and that was what he wished it to be.

‘Of course, I am out of sorts, and you must expect me to be so just now. I shall learn to smile by the time your wedding-day arrives. . . . Droll—is it not?—that on the day of my father’s funeral I can think of a wedding!’

The bitterness in the tone of the last words was less apparent than the note of regret for something that had gone away from him for ever. And it was that note which went through Polly’s heart, making her long to be able to comfort him. There had been an explanation between them, and therefore they quite understood that their relationship was that of brother and sister—no more. And so, she ought to have been able to answer him without any hesitation; but there *was* hesitation and some awkwardness, too, in the manner of her reply. She wanted to say so much more than the words would express.

‘I wish you would not speak of that, Michael. I shall do nothing without your advice; and it must be something very curious that will make me act otherwise than as you think wisest and best. You know we agreed that you were to speak to me about all things just as—as your father would have done.’

He drew back a half-pace, but so quickly that it was like a start of surprise. It indicated a shock of some sort, for his lips quivered when he tried to say calmly:

‘But *that* subject, Polly—you must not ask my advice on t! Then he mastered himself and, almost calmly:

‘You cannot expect from me the counsel which my father could have given on such a question. In everything else I am ready to take his place—at least I can try.’

The man was pleading against himself. He did not observe the wistful glance in the girl’s drooping eyes as she said meekly :

‘Very well, Michael.’

And then she went away ; and he sat down in his father’s chair, and the darkness closed upon him.

(To be continued.)

The Instability of Land.

THE inadequacy of books to convey to the mind any just appreciation of the great physical changes which have taken place and which are still in progress upon our globe, as well as of the immensity of time which those changes represent, has often been the subject of remark. The late Canon Kingsley, in his charming little book 'Town Geology,' even goes so far as to tell the young geologist that he may find a more profitable occupation for a thorough wet day than that of sitting at home reading a work on geology:—to wit, he may put on his mackintosh and thick boots, and betake himself to the gutter of the nearest turnpike road and learn therefrom how continents are made and unmade.* To the same effect it is urged by Mr. Darwin that no written treatise will duly impress the mind, but that 'a man must for years examine for himself great piles of superimposed strata, and watch the sea at work grinding down old rocks, and making fresh sediment, before he can hope to comprehend anything of the lapse of time, the monuments of which we see around us.'† Perhaps, however, the converse of such statements may be at least equally true. The evidence may lie before our eyes, and the record of the rocks may be written in a good bold hand, but we shall commonly fail to decipher its characters unless we have first studied their key.

Geology, though it is no longer in its infancy, still labours in some degree under the disadvantage of being a young science. Its first principles are less widely familiar than those of sciences which have had time to strike their roots deeply into our ordinary thought and literature. Astronomy will furnish a comparison. Many centuries have passed since

'. . . inter ignes
Luna minores'

was a matter-of-fact conception of the heavenly bodies and not merely a poetic figure. But as late as the latter half of the seventeenth century it was deemed necessary to argue gravely against the theory that fossils were a sportive freak of nature 'playing the mimic in the mineral world.'‡ And even in our own day, though we have outgrown such preposterous notions as this, those people are probably exceptional who have given more than a casual thought to

* 'Town Geology,' by C. Kingsley. Chap. I. p. 20.

† 'Origin of Species.' Chap. IX. p. 282.

‡ Lyell's 'Principles of Geology.' Chap. III. p. 41.

the wondrous antecedents of the world on which they tread. Physical features are commonly regarded as fixed and well-nigh immutable things. Something perhaps is allowed for alterations of level effected by earthquakes in disturbed regions, something for the encroachments of the sea upon an exposed coast, something for volcanic phenomena; but there are comparatively few who realise that an incessant change of contour and outline is everywhere in progress, and that even the grandest features of nature, those which we are in the habit of regarding as types of immobility, are the direct results of the instability of land.

One peculiar obstacle long stood in the way of geological progress, and led geologists of a past generation to propose many unsound theories which have since been abandoned. When first the earth's past history was said to have occupied a hundred million years or more, theologians naturally took fright at the apparent heterodoxy. The controversy between geology and Genesis has, however, assumed a new aspect beneath the able pens of Hugh Miller, Dr. Dawson* and others, who have freely abandoned the literal interpretation of the Mosaic 'day.' In the following pages we shall assume the title-deeds of the geologist to have been proved which constitute him the millionaire of time.

We scarcely speak with a due regard to accuracy when we call any natural agent 'destructive,' for what the forces of nature destroy with one hand they reconstruct with the other. Such is conspicuously the case with water in all its varying forms: rain, running streams, glaciers, and ocean waves. Its effect is to remove from one place to another, from a higher to a lower level. If, then, starting with Kingsley's instructive gutter, we go to some rivulet swollen and turbid with rain, we may measure for ourselves the transporting power of water. A gallon of such turbid water, if left standing till it gets clear, will have a certain amount of sediment at the bottom. This will be our unit. It will then be a matter of simple multiplication to ascertain how much sediment is wafted past us in a minute. From this we can further reckon the whole amount for each rainy day. We can then go on to calculate the drainage of a country, a nation, a continent, the world. Nor is it only the rainy days which do the work, though they do the most of it. The process never entirely ceases. The river is, day and night and for ever, urging the particles forward, sweeping the sand along its bed, occasionally giving the boulders another and yet another turn but always in the same direction. Frost with its myriad fine wedges helps it by breaking up the rocks and soils, and thus facili-

* 'The Testimony of the Rocks,' by Hugh Miller. 'Archæia' and other works by Dr. Dawson, F.R.S., Principal of McGill College, Montreal, Canada.

tating their removal by rain. The glacier helps it by rasping the sides and ploughing the bed of its channel. In a word, it is only a question of time how soon the river would bear its native mountains upon its bosom, and cast them into the sea;—only a question of time how soon (if no counterbalancing forces existed) rain, rivers, and sea combined would pare down all the earth's protuberances, and bury them beneath a universal ocean.

And the sea itself? Next to the action of rain and rivers comes the gnawing effect of coast waves. The wave thunders against the cliff, which mocks its seemingly impotent rage by dashing it backward in a cloud of foam and spray, but it returns again and again to the charge until persistency wins the day. The east coast of England, which has for centuries been fast yielding to the attacks of the German Ocean, furnishes Sir C. Lyell with the majority of his illustrations in the interesting chapters* upon the action of tides and currents. That eminent geologist tells us how towns and villages, marked by name in old maps, now lie fathoms deep beneath the waves. In one case, which came under his notice, houses had within the memory of living men stood upon a cliff fifty feet high, but in less than half a century houses and cliff were all engulfed, and sea water deep enough to float a frigate occupied their site. As many as twelve churches, each farther landward than the last, have been built in one parish, and all but one have been swallowed up by the sea. Churchyards have consequently been destroyed in many places, the corpses and skeletons having been washed out of their graves and floated away by the tide. Sir C. Lyell himself saw human remains protruding from the cliff at Seaford in Kent in 1844. And he humorously alludes to a scene depicted by Bewick, which, he says, numerous points on that coast might be suggested: the graveyard of a ruinous abbey, undermined and isolated by the sea, with a broken tombstone in the foreground serving as a perch for the cormorants, and bearing the inscription, 'To perpetuate the memory of one whose existence was obliterated, and whose monument was ready to be swept away by the waves.' And he says, though somewhat sarcastically, 'it is possible that such a tombstone would have been a fit tribute to the memory of some philosopher who had taught the permanence of existing boundaries, the firmness of the foundations of human houses.'

And this may be said to be a somewhat more or less of the sea's overbearing influence upon the mountains, and the evidence those rocks which have greater masses of resistance to the eroding element, and have those which have less. Still the great waves of the eastern

* *Principles of Geology*, chaps. viii. and ix.

and south-eastern coasts of England leads to some interesting speculations in regard to the past. It points to the probability of the tradition which makes the Goodwin Sands take their name from Earl Goodwin, the father of Harold, whose estates shortly before the Conquest are supposed to have extended as far seaward as the site of that dangerous sand-bank. So also a ridge of sand running across the Straits of Dover is thought to be the last remnant of an isthmus about six miles broad, which may, before the days of Caesar, have connected Britain with Gaul.*

Looking at such things as these, we are apt at first sight to imagine that, as re-modelling agents, sea waves must be more powerful than rivers. That such is not the case, and that the drainage system of a country, spreading as it does over the whole surface of the land, is in reality the more effective though less conspicuous agent, both reason and observation show. The delta of the Mississippi (to take one notable instance) is computed to cover an area of from 12,300 to 13,600 square miles.† All this of course represents a commensurate waste of the soil and highlands of the American continent. Professor Geikie reckons this great river to be still bearing mud into the sea at a rate of between three and four hundred million tons annually; and from this and from similar statistics he calculates that, before the sea could eat away more than a mere marginal strip from the shores of Europe, the whole of that continent might be washed into the ocean by 'atmospheric denudation';‡—in other words, by rain, frost, and rivers.

Rain, moreover, acts chemically as well as mechanically, and by means of the acids which it contains dissolves various mineral substances out of the rocks. And hence it comes to pass that rivers become carriers of other things besides such solids as sand and silt. Analysts are apt now and then to give us unpleasant surprises, and to tell us that the sparkling water, clear as crystal, which we are drinking in the fond belief that it is as pure as it looks, contains various unsavoury and unsanitary ingredients. But, besides these objectionable contents, they will probably name others of greater or less virtue, as magnesia, silica, potash, soda, iron, lime. All are alike invisible, or, in other words, 'in solution'; and they occur in proportionately small quantities. But when we consider the number and volume of the rivers which are for ever discharging their contents into the sea, it will be evident that large

* Lyell's 'Principles of Geology.' Chap. XX. p. 532.

† Ibid. Chap. XIX. p. 454.

‡ 'The Geology of England and Wales,' by H. B. Woodward. Chap. XIII. On Denudation and Scenery, p. 392, foot-note.

quantities of mineral matter must be thus removed. It is even said that the sea owes its saltiness mainly to the fresh water that runs into it; for the fresh water itself is carried away again by evaporation, leaving the salts behind. Some notion of the aggregate amount of invisible mineral matter thus carried into the sea may be gathered from Professor Prestwich's calculation that the Thames alone discharges annually 548,230 tons of it, or, roughly speaking, a ton a minute.* Among the substances thus being continually carried into the sea in solution, lime, dissolved out of limestone or chalk rocks, is one of the most general and abundant.

Along the greater part of our south coast we find chalk cliffs of dazzling whiteness. But on closer examination we shall see that the soft white chalk is parted at intervals of a few feet by lines of black, grotesquely shaped flints. We shall be approximating the truth if we say that nine-tenths of the cliff is chalk, or nearly pure carbonate of lime, and that the other tenth is flint, or nearly pure silica. The two substances, so utterly distinct in their composition, are very generally found associated together. Beneath such a cliff the beach will be found to consist of flint shingle alone, no longer grotesquely shaped, but broken up and rounded. We learn, therefore, that the sea, in forming the beach, has washed nine-tenths of the former cliff into its vast alembic, for tides and currents to distribute as they may.

But while waves make their breaches in our characteristic white cliffs, and rivers bear our chalk downs into the sea, Nature has prepared elsewhere a balance and a counterpoise. At the bottom of the Atlantic, tiny microscopic animals, for the most part those known as 'globigerinæ,' are building up much such another chalk bed with their limy shell cases, and in much the same way, apparently, as our chalk downs were built ages ago. And curiously enough the orthodox accompaniment of flint is again forthcoming, supplied by minute siliceous animals and algæ, known respectively as 'radiolarians' and 'diatoms.' What seer will foretell the destiny of the Atlantic 'ooze,' the Albion of the future?

Limestone rocks, under which head we include marble, have originated in more ways than one; but as the commonest and most typical varieties are largely composed of coral, we shall find, in the coral islands and reefs of the present, an illustration of the conditions under which for the most part they came into existence. Turning, then, our backs upon the noisy limestone quarry, where

* 'Chemical Action in its Geological Aspect,' by T. Mellard Reade, C.E., F.G.S. *'Science Gossip,'* January 1879.

pickaxe, crowbar, and dynamite are doing their best to demolish the edifice, we must go to the Pacific and Indian Oceans to see how it was built.*

Living corals are found at various depths, but the true reef-builders, with whom we are now especially concerned, work at or near the surface, and are not found in a live state in water deeper than 150 feet. It is evident, then, that, where the floor of the sea is rising, no great results are to be expected, for the zoophyte, building in shallow water, will soon reach the surface, where the work must necessarily stop. With such a reef, however, fringing the shore, all coral-building must begin. But if the area be one of slow subsidence, the zoophytes will continue building upwards, keeping pace with the downward motion of the land. And this is exactly what has occurred over large oceanic areas, which are far more frequently areas of subsidence than of the reverse. If, then, the shore which the reef is fringing be that of a continent or of a large island, a 'barrier reef' will result. That is to say, two things will happen. The corals will continue to build vertically, forming by the dissolution of their débris a cement which binds the whole into a mass of solid limestone; and from this ridge or reef the shore of the mainland, as it sinks, will recede, leaving an ever-widening strait between itself and the reef. Thus grew the great barrier reef off the north-eastern coast of Australia, 1,100 miles in length, and attaining in places a distance of seventy miles from the mainland.

If now we transfer this same process to a reef fringing a small insular rock, we shall see the origin of that peculiar feature of tropical seas, the roughly circular reef, enclosing a lagoon. The zoophytes, which begin their work around the base of the rock, continue it upwards as the rock sinks, until at last the highest peak of the former island disappears beneath the waves, and its position is only indicated by a diadem of coral. Sometimes it happens that, after masses of coral have been thus accumulated, the downward motion of the sea bottom is exchanged for one of local upheaval, and coral islands stand revealed. Thus grew the Maldivé and Laccadive islands and many others. Built up they are by these tiny artificers, who thrive amid the storms, building faster upon a windward than on a leeward shore, and rearing their edifices in defiance of the ponderous breakers of the open ocean, before which a coast of granite would yield.

But it is time to turn our attention to those subterranean forces which counterbalance the levelling effect of those upon the surface. We have seen that disintegrated rock matter, when swept into

* *Lyell's 'Principles of Geology.'* Chap. XLIX.

the ocean, is not strictly speaking destroyed. On the contrary, it goes to form new beds of sandstone, clay, or slate. But to all intents and purposes it might as well have been annihilated, if it were destined to remain for ever at the bottom of the sea. The Atlantic 'ooze,' it is true, is a new chalk bed, but it is not yet a terrestrial surface. And even coral islands would never, by the sole work of the zoophytes, rise above sea level. But for the nether fires and their associated phenomena, dry land would in the course of time cease to be.

Earthquakes, it is well known, have often sunk tracts of land beneath the sea, and have as often raised others permanently to a great height. A single shock seldom changes the level more than a few feet, but the cumulative effect of successive shocks, with intervals of repose of greater or less duration, is well seen on the coast of Chili, which has been raised by this means several hundred feet. In this case the upraised marine sediment shows, by the traces of man's handicraft imbedded in it, that eighty feet at least have been upheaved since the advent of semi-civilised man.

To the enormous results of volcanic action all Oceania testifies, for the oceanic islands are, in the great majority of cases, of recent volcanic origin. Even the coral island must have had a nucleus of rock for the zoophyte to build upon, and such nucleus would generally be formed of volcanic matter. We are too much accustomed to measure the powers of volcanoes by such catastrophes as the destruction of Pompeii, or by the prodigious discharges of lava and boiling mud which have been recorded in Iceland, Mexico, or Java. And truly prodigious these have sometimes been : Shaptar Jokul, for instance, in the former island, is reported to have sent forth in the year 1783 two streams of molten rock, whose united length was nearly a hundred miles, and whose breadth, where the nature of the ground permitted it to spread, amounted to seven, twelve, or even fifteen miles.* But what is this compared with the birth-throes of a continent? In the clusters of islands which throng the southern seas we see but partial traces of what submarine volcanoes have at intervals piled up over areas as large as those of continents now existing. Surely, then, it is no exaggeration to speak of the birth-throes of a continent! We venture on no prophecy. The potential continent may be stifled in the birth, or may come to maturity. But it is quite a possible contingency that the Polynesian area might hereafter be upraised, the islands in that case spreading, growing, and uniting, until something like the present Malayan Archipelago, that type of Europe in its

* Lyell's 'Principles of Geology.' Chap. XXVII. p. 51.

infancy,* would be realised. Then further upheavals in far distant time might make it a continent indeed, ready to take its place in cosmical economy, when Europe shall have sunk into a watery grave. Doubtless it is a dream, but, like many another dream, it is the offspring of the images of the past. It is thus, in all probability, that some, at least, of existing continents have struggled into being.

The elevation and subsidence of land on a large scale is a subject which is well summed up in the words of Mr. Darwin: 'The great oceans,' he says, 'are still mainly areas of subsidence; the great archipelagoes still areas of oscillation of level, and the continents areas of elevation.' 'Our continents,' he adds, 'seem to have been formed by a preponderance, during many oscillations of level, of the force of elevation.†

That in our own country, as in most others, there have been great fluctuations of level even in the latest of geological ages, is easily shown. The submerged forests which fringe our coasts in many places tell unmistakably of a higher level in time past; while the remains of sea beaches thirty feet above the present tide-mark, as plainly chronicle a lower one. Nor are these by any means the fullest evidences of oscillation of which Britain can boast. Clear proof exists that the time was when the highlands of Wales, Cumberland, and Scotland stood forth as rocks amid a frozen sea which covered the lowlands. And equally clear is the proof that at another time the land was upraised so high that England, Ireland, and France, or rather the areas which are now known by those names, were all united together. Then, as some think, a great river flowed northward along what is now the bed of the German Ocean, having the Thames and the Rhine for its co-tributaries. Be this as it may, there cannot be the least doubt but that, at the time of which we are speaking, a river whose dimensions must have been considerable, and whose tributaries were the Avon and the Stour, wound its wandering course where now the Solent forms an arm of the sea.‡

* 'I fully agree with Mr. Godwin Austen that the present condition of the Malay Archipelago, with its numerous large islands, separated by wide and shallow seas, probably represents the former state of Europe, when most of our formations were accumulating.' Darwin's 'Origin of Species.' Chap. IX. p. 290.

† 'Geology teaches us that the present continents have been formed by the union of large pre-existing islands.' Lyell's 'Principles of Geology.' Chap. XXXIX. p. 367.

‡ Darwin's 'Origin of Species.' Chap. IX. p. 309.

§ This and several other contemporary physical features, which have since undergone vast alterations, if not entire removal, are described by Mr. James Geikie. For instance, he tells us that there was at that period a range of chalk downs stretching all over the now marine area between the Isle of Purbeck and the Needles. ('The Great Ice Age,' pp. 444-448.)

All this is but the yesterday of geology. It is therefore no matter of surprise that various attempts have been made to approximate its antiquity in actual years; but it is almost needless to add that no precise estimate can be given, and that those which have been attempted are widely at variance with each other.

But perhaps the aggregate of change which oscillations of level, assisted by rain, frost, and sea, can effect, is most strikingly brought home to us when we contemplate our great mountain ranges.

It is usual to divide geological time into three main portions. Towards the commencement of the last of these, the 'Tertiary' (and now we go backward in time beyond any possible computation in years, even of the most conjectural kind), the clay beds around London were deposited in the sea.* That sea might have been about a hundred fathoms in depth, and was probably not far from land, being off the mouth of a mighty river which then flowed from West to East at or near to the 51st parallel of latitude. At that time the world had no Alps, no Pyrenees, no Himalayas. It is not meant to affirm that no portions of the rocks of which those ranges consist had then come into existence, for parts of them are of older date; but that mountains they had not begun to be. Nor is this adequately stating the case; for when the deposition of the London clay was a thing completed, soft sediment had yet to be laid down at the bottom of the sea, which has since been turned into hard stone, and stands now high upraised upon all those great old-world ranges.

We have been told that 'many a hero lived before Agamemnon,' but that all such died 'unwept' and unsung because in those dim ages of myth and marvel there was no 'gifted bard' to immortalise them. With equal truth might it be said that many a mountain reared its snow-clad peak into the sky before Mont Blanc or Mount Everest raised its dripping crest above the waves, but that, for want of a contemporary surveyor to map them, we know nothing about their elevations and not much about their sites. What, then, are mountains? Grand as they appear to us pigmy mortals, they have been described as 'wrinkles' upon the cooling and contracting crust of the earth; and in this respect they have been compared to the wrinkles upon the cooling and contracting skin of a baked apple. And though there are those nowadays who warn us that the whole philosophy of mountain ranges cannot be thus comprised in a nutshell, and that the comparative hardness of the rocks of which they are composed may be the principal reason why mountains stand forth in relief above the plains, yet folds and wrinkles in a literal sense they very commonly are.

* 'The Geology of England and Wales,' by H. B. Woodward, p. 266.

When the poet sang, in reference to Ocean, 'Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow,' he uttered a profound truth. Time writes no wrinkles on Ocean, but he writes—ay, and rubs out again, also—full many a wrinkle on land.

Mountains, whether they owe their form to folds in the rocks or to other causes, are in any case mere trifling inequalities of the earth's outer film, when they are relatively considered. They are subject to incessant atmospheric waste, and to oscillations of level, slow but sure. And so it has come to pass that they have appeared in some places and disappeared in others before the wand of Time the magician. It may be said with truth that our present continents indicate what have been the chief land centres for an enormous period, but Time in the meanwhile has so moulded their contours and varied their elevations, that snowy ranges now rear their heads where formerly Ocean reigned, and billows now roll over all that remains of the cloud-capped mountains of the past.

We have demonstrated this in part. The rise of our mountain ranges in later geological time is a fact capable of the most positive proof. A little reflection will also show that the converse of this, the subsidence and decay of mountain ranges, must have taken place simultaneously. In order to make this clearer we will in imagination return once more to that great river to which, as we have seen, we owe our London Clay.

When we do so there rises before us a picture whose colours are faded with age, and many of whose features are erased. But we may distinguish the broad bosom of a stream which, stretching like a band of silver beneath the genial skies, divides green savannahs, where flourish the palm and other trees of tropical or sub-tropical form. Strange quadrupeds, which no zoological collection of our day will enable us to identify, browse upon herbage unknown to the herbarium of Kew. Among the former we note one whose nearest living representative would be the American tapir. Aquatic birds, whose beaks are armed with teeth, circle in the air or dive beneath the water. Land birds, bearing some resemblance to the Australian emu, but, unlike the emu, powerful birds of flight, soar above the plain.* Seaward the turtle crawls up the coast to deposit her eggs. On the sun-baked mud-flats bask surfeited crocodiles; while the small fry and crustaceans of

* Mr. W. H. Shrubsole, in a paper entitled 'Notes on the Geology of Sheppey,' published in the 'Guide to Sheerness on the Sea and the Isle of Sheppey,' tells us that this bird was formerly known as *Lithornis Emuinus*, from its supposed resemblance to the emu; and that Professor Owen has lately re-named it *Argillornis longipennis*, because its remains show it to have been a powerful bird of flight, 'standing perhaps six feet high.'

the estuary have assuredly a bad time of it amid a host of sharks and sundry veritable sea-serpents, described as being about thirteen feet long.*

But the point which especially concerns us is this :—A river of such volume could be no mere insular stream. Great rivers demand great continental watersheds. Mountains, then, must certainly be supposed to lie somewhere to the westward where the river has its source. Moreover, the sand of its bed is such as a granite range might supply. But where, we ask, are now these granitic highlands? To our 'where?' echo answers 'where,' nor does any other voice reply but the thunder of the Atlantic and the scream of the sea-gull in those directions in which we naturally look. All that can be offered is fair and reasonable conjecture. Nor does any hypothesis seem more probable than that which Mr. J. Starkie Gardner has lately proposed.† It may be (he says) that we see some of the remnants and worn foundations of such a mountain range in the granites of Brittany, Cornwall, and Ireland, and in the sea-girt rocks of the Channel Islands and Scilly.

We would repeat, in concluding, that the above remarks have reference only to the later portion of that time of which geology treats. But even this takes us back to a period long cycles ere the war-whoop of the savage had disturbed the echoes, or his wigwam had been planted on the soil. It takes us back to a period, since which the busy finger of Time has slowly accumulated such enormous results, that the grandest natural features have been altered beyond all identification, or completely swept away. Though we search the whole world over, we shall now find scarcely a plant or an animal which bears more than an imperfect resemblance to those that flourished in the age of the London Clay. Climates have varied within the same areas from at least sub-tropical heat to the extreme of Arctic cold. Hills have been levelled, valleys filled, and coast-lines limned afresh. The snowy range and the submarine depression have exchanged places. Earth's solid monuments, which, placed in the bold foreground of the present, seem framed to endure for ever, have melted away in the long perspective, till they vanished like a summer cloud. But the same throughout the ages, changeless in the midst of change, are night with its mutely eloquent canopy of stars, and the wild wave whose plaintive monotone is the requiem of the worlds that have been.

WILLIAM DOWNES.

* 'The Geology of England and Wales,' by H. B. Woodward, p. 266.

† 'How were the Eocenes of England formed?' by J. Starkie Gardner, F.G.S. 'Popular Science Review,' July 1878.

The Homes and Haunts of the Italian Poets.

X.—PARINI.

BY T. ADOLPHUS TROLLOPE.

FROM the death of Tasso in 1595 to the birth of Parini in 1729 is a period of 134 years, during which long lapse of time we have not found one name to be added to our small and select gallery. Not that the names of versifiers in ever-increasing abundance may not be found by the dozen in the pages of the literary historians—of Tiraboschi, of Quadrio, and of Arcadian Crescimbeni—and in the case of many of them their forgotten volumes on the dusty shelves of old libraries. Their ‘homes’ were the utterly uneventful ancestral palaces in cities sunk in the leaden repose of despotisms well established and no longer fearful of constant revolution, and their ‘haunts’ the innumerable ‘academies’ which sprung up in every one of Italy’s hundred cities, and, under the most inconceivably absurd appellations, formed the delight and sole occupation of a generation lapsed into the very quintessence of fribbledom. No poets! Why, ‘poetry’ was the main occupation of the genteel world in that phase of its existence; and every gentleman gave whatever hours could be spared from the due cultivation of his wig and the proper management of his snuff-box, and the arduous and very absorbing duties of his position as a *cavalier servente*, to the making of verses. But though the ways and habits of society in the Italian cities during that dead time are very far from uninteresting or unprofitable objects of inquiry, it would be vain to hope that any of the individual lives of which that society was composed could be made interesting to readers of this so intensely different, so diametrically opposed time and clime.

Skiping over, then, that dead-low-water period of the seventeenth century, we come to a time the dissolving influences and destructive processes of which were of hopeful augury only in so far that they cleared the ground for future building up. As far as the livers in that time were concerned (confining our observations to the nations of Latin stock), it was, perhaps, a worse time than the previous dead-low-water time; or at least, if it contained new possibilities for a small number of the choicest spirits, it was such for the peruke- and broadcloth-wearing world.

And the social system into which our Parini was born laboured under additional disadvantages, derived from the circumstances of its immediately previous political history.

In the latter half of the eighteenth century Milan was still in many respects and to a large degree Spanish; and it was this society, the Spanish foundations of which were heaving with the new French leaven, while it was kept in material order by the strong but not oppressive hand of an Austrian governor, which formed the subject-matter that inspired Parini's muse.

Parini was born, in 1729, at the village of Bosisio, on the shore of the Lake of Pusiano. The lake, if not perhaps the village, will be readily found in the map about half-way between Como and Lecco, and some twenty miles to the north of Milan. Bosisio is a large and important village on the eastern shore of the lake, in a lovely position at the foot of the mountains which accompany either branch of the Lake of Como, even to the outlets where they open to give course to their waters athwart the vast plains of Lombardy. There is enough of romantic beauty about the position to tempt one to indulge in *banalités* about the influences of it on the development of the poet's genius and the like; but this would be attributing transalpine nineteenth-century ideas and capabilities to a southern eighteenth-century temperament, in a thoroughly misleading fashion. Parini, like the rest of his countrymen and contemporaries, had not the slightest admiration or conception of any 'beauties of nature,' save such as were by courtesy called such in the alleys and terraces of 'trim gardens,' and his muse was essentially of the town, townlike.

Nor, though he speaks in long-subsequent years of 'il vago Eupili¹ mio,'² was Bosisio and its lovely neighbourhood long a 'haunt' of our poet. His father was, in Italian technical phrase, 'benestante'—that is to say, one who lived on his own property. But the property was a very small one—only one small farm—and the life was no doubt such as would not have satisfied a person so placed in other lands and in more pushing and less easily contented times. The young Parini, his only son, showed at a very early age such an aptitude for study, and such a declared propensity to literature, that the father, who had lived without ambition for himself, became ambitious for his boy; and the upshot was that the family moved to Milan for the sake of obtaining for the lad an education such as his native Bosisio could not afford him. The hopes that were conceived from the promise of the boy's talent must have been high; for it would seem that

¹ Eupilus was the ancient name of the Lago Pusiano.

² *La Vita Rustica*, ode to a rural life.

the family ventured its all upon them. The poor little ancestral farm must have been sold to render the emigration to Milan possible, and with what result, as far as the dreams of fortune were concerned, may be seen from the following lines, written when the proceeds of the farm were all eaten up and gone, and the poor scholar was left with a widowed mother to support :—

Ch' io possa morire
 Se ora trovo mi avere al mio comando
 Un par di soldi sol, non che due lire.
 Limosina di messe Dio sa quando
 Io ne potrò toccare; e non c'è un cane
 Che mi tolga al mio stato miserando.
 La mia povera madre non ha pane
 Se non da me; ed io non ho denaro
 Da mantenerla almeno per domane—

which may be Englished, not without loss of terseness and expression, as may be supposed, as follows :—

May I die if I know where to turn for a sou,
 Much less for two francs that to-morrow are due;
 And as for the luck of a mass to say,
 God knows when one may come in my way;
 And of friends to help I know not one
 To put out a hand to me under the sun.
 My mother—poor mother!—has none but me
 To stand between her and misery;
 And, unless from you you let me borrow,
 I have not a crust to give her to-morrow.

The lines are part of a letter in verse to one Canon Agudio, imploring the loan of ten zechins. Whether the application was successful or not there is nothing to inform us; nor have we any means of knowing whether the poor mother lived on through those days of struggle and misery to see her son famous.

It will be seen also from the above lines that Parini was in orders. It was quite a matter of course that he should be. For a penniless scholar and lover of literature no other career was to be thought of. Nor did such a candidate for orders himself for a moment pretend, nor did any human being, lay or clerical, pretend, or expect him to pretend, that he had any motive whatsoever in entering the ecclesiastical career other than the hope of picking up a living by means of some little bit of preferment.

His first instructors were the Barnabite monks of the Arcimboldi College, who rapidly taught him a thorough and profound contempt for themselves and the whole system of their teaching. Here is a passage from the first book of his great poem, the 'Gior-nata,' which expresses his own reminiscences of those days at the Collegio Arcimboldi :

Nè i mesti della Dea Pallade studi
 Ti son meno odiosi. Avverso ad essi
 Troppo ti fero i garruli recinti,
 Ove l'arti migliori e le scienze
 Cangiata in mostri e in vane orride larve,
 Fan le capaci volte eccheggiar sempre
 Di giovanili strida.¹

Sundry other intimations of the excessive cruelty with which correction was too often administered in those cloistered colleges may be met with in the writers of that age and country. 'I passed,' says Corbetta, 'my early years in these schools, and, remembering the inhumanity and cruelty of the pedants who ruled in them, and considering with pain the evil results which I have seen produced by it, I am in a position to testify to the accuracy of Locke's assertion, that it is rarely the case that cruelly chastised children become worthy men.'² One Father Branda, who had been Parini's master, testified subsequently that Parini had profited but little (as was, beyond all question, entirely true) by his scholastic education. And here, extracted from an extant letter by him, is Parini's reply to his master's assertion:— 'I do not deny anything the Padre Branda says. It is too true that when I frequented the schools near the Church of S. Alessandro [the Collegio Arcimboldi] I recompensed ill the anxious cares of my poor parents, and attended but little to what is there called study. Nevertheless, although I never was among those at the top of the class, I did not any the more for that remain among the inglorious mob of dunces at the bottom. And I could still, if I need were, show the proud trophies that were decreed to me, on passing from one class to another, by some of the colleagues of Father Branda. It is indeed true that he will not find my name hung up on the scholastic walls, with some ingenious emblem attached to it and surrounded by a gilt frame, for my parents never had any money to throw away.'

In his twenty-first year he suffered from an illness which attacked his muscles, especially those of his legs, from which he never entirely recovered, suffering all his life afterwards from an imperfection of walking, which showed itself in a want of power to lift the foot in stepping. Cantù insinuated that this was due to

¹ 'Nor are the sorrowful studies presided over by the goddess Pallas less odious to thee [himself]. Too truly they were rendered hateful to thee by those wordy halls, where the liberal arts and sciences, transformed into monsters, and horrid empty forms, cause the vast vaults to be ever echoing to youthful cries.'

² Cited by Cantù in his work on *Parini and Lombardy in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 92, where also Cantù himself bears his testimony to the practice of extreme cruelty in these monastic schools.

excess of debauchery in early life; but I find no word in confirmation of this in Parini's earlier biographers, and it does not seem at all probable that such a cause should have led to such a result. In all other respects at the time of his leaving college and entering the Milanese world his appearance was a remarkably prepossessing one. 'He was tall of stature,' says Reina, 'with a large and handsome forehead, extremely vivacious and large black eyes, a nose approaching the aquiline, and open and noble features. The muscles of his face were extremely mobile and strongly marked, his hand a mistress of elegant gesture, and his lips shaped themselves in accordance with every movement of his mind. He had a powerful voice, sonorous and flexible, a resolute and energetic manner of speaking, and a gravity of countenance frequently sweetened by a pleasant smile.'

'Such gifts and qualities combined,' says Reina further, 'to render him acceptable and sought for by the great.' But such seeking is a very doubtful benefit to a young man in the position of Parini. He was a young *abbate*, with no means whatsoever of maintaining himself, save by such chance profits of his profession as were to be picked up by means of solicitation very little to be distinguished from beggary, or by some of the very few occupations which were not considered incompatible with it. One of these was acting as a scribe. And the first means by which he attempted to earn his own bread seems to have been as a copying clerk for the lawyers. It was work, however, not only very miserably paid, but very precarious; as Parini was doubtless experiencing when he wrote the above-quoted letter to the Canon Agudio.

The social system at Milan had not in those days reached that stage of development in which reputation brings with it a certain modicum, at all events, of emolument. It was still possible for a poet to find himself famous and without bread. In 1752, the twenty-third year of Parini's age, he published a small collection of poems of no great value, at Lugano, with the false date of London. He called himself Ripano Eupilino in the title page, the first name being an anagram of Parini, and the second a declaration of the district from which he came, the lake whose classic name was Eupili. The pseudonym does not seem to have been adopted for the purpose of concealment of the authorship, but rather in conformity with the then prevalent fashion among the *letterati* of adopting some fantastic *nom de plume*. The little work met with an unexpected amount of success, productive of considerable *fama* (fame), but leaving the poet's *fame* (hunger) just where it was. The work, however, recommended him to the notice of the

'Trasformati,' an academy at Milan who chose so to call themselves. They gave him no bread, having probably most of them but little to give; but they gave him so much applause that the more celebrated 'Arcadians' in far-off Rome heard of him, and made him a member of their famous academy. To be an Arcadian was to have received the most authentic *hall-mark* of poesy and recognition as a servant of Apollo. But few servants have ever been so badly paid as those who served the god in those days in Italy. Fifteen pence, English, was the price of a volume of two hundred pages at Venice; Gozzi's poetical '*Gazzetta*' was sold for five sous—prices which show only too unmistakably that the authors could have received little or nothing for the MSS. Chambers's Dictionary and Middleton's '*Life of Cicero*' were translated for three shillings the printed sheet. Two-pence halfpenny was the recognised price of a sonnet. And, considering the quality of the wares, the poets even at that rate would seem to have been better paid than the translators. Goldoni received thirty shillings for one of his plays *a soggetto* (that is, those whose subject, characters, and plot only were furnished by the dramatist, the dialogue being left to the actors), and from fifteen to twenty pounds for his written dramas; from which data Gozzi calculates that each verse was worth something less than each stitch of a cobbler. Passeroni, one of Parini's earliest friends, was so poor that Sterne, when he saw him at Milan, surprised at the evidently miserable condition of his circumstances, and saying, 'Why, you must have made ever so much money by your "*Cicerone*,"' was answered that the poem had not repaid the expenses of printing. It is true that the '*Cicerone*' had made its author a member of the '*Trasformati*,' of the '*Arcadians*,' of the '*Fluttuanti*,' of the '*Agiati*,' of the '*Affidati*,' of the '*Infecondi*,' and many more academies in different cities of the peninsula.¹ There was abundance of praise, but no scrap of pudding.

A preformance of a very different sort from the idyllic rhymes of Ripano Eupilino brought Parini a few years later yet more prominently before the eyes of his fellow-citizens. His old schoolmaster, the Father Onofrio Branda, published a certain dialogue entitled '*Della Lingua Toscana*,' the scope and object of which was to show that the Tuscan alone was, or ought to be, the language of literature; and that the Milanese tongue, despite the mass of literature which belonged to it, was but a barbarous dialect. Of all possible subjects, Divine or profane, it would be impossible to name one which was at that time calculated to excite so much bitter feeling.

¹ Cantù, *L' Abbate Parini e la Lombardia*, p. 257.

With the exception of a small knot of cruscanteing puritans, all Milan was moved to a fury of indignation; and Parini was selected by a number of his literary friends to be the leader of the attack on the other side. His first writing in reply to Branda was couched in moderate and courteous language; but Branda, furious at the audacity of his old pupil, retorted in a tone that was far from being such. Other combatants rushed into the arena, and the contest became, with the advent of each new combatant, every day more personal, more bitter, and more violent. Parini said himself at an after day that the whole quarrel had been a disgrace to literature; and as it proceeded it so far transgressed the limits of a purely literary dispute that the Austrian authorities were obliged to put an end to it with a high hand.

Parini, however, had been 'his country's' champion—for a Milanese of those days knew no 'country' but Milan—and the contest had brought his name to the front; and at last, too, he seemed to have attained a position in which a certain modicum of bread would be accorded to him—very salt-tasting bread, as Dante had remarked, making a remarkably wry mouth as he savoured such—but supplied with a degree of daily certainty to which the poet had hitherto been a stranger. He became a tutor in the Borromeo and Serbelloni families. And we have the results of his observations on the life to which he had in this capacity an access, at least as a spectator, in the poem by virtue of which his name still occupies a conspicuous position on the roll of Italian poets. The noble Borromeo and the noble Serbelloni of the day little thought, when they were bringing this handsome young *abbate*, who had achieved celebrity in a world entirely cut off from their own, within the charmed circle which hedged their social life, that, though he came merely as a mute spectator, they were introducing 'a chiel amang them takin' notes,' and still less that he would 'prent' them. Even when there was no question of tutor-work to be done it was always the correct thing to have an *abbate* hanging about a house; and an *abbate* who had a noble forehead and large brilliant black eyes, and who into the bargain could write sonnets and madrigals on fans and fire-screens, was a catch indeed. And it would seem that even before the tutorship days such a means or occasion of communication between the fashionable world and the penniless poet had been established; for some of his juvenile verses have been recovered from such media of *publication*, and, with doubtful kindness to his literary reputation, preserved.

For it was not an age that could be said to hold literature in no esteem. Literature entered largely into the occupations and

amusements of the leisured classes. It has done so in every age among the sedentary and city-life-loving Italians, to a greater degree than has for the most part been the case among the non-workers of our own more open-air-living and field-sport-loving people. And the servants of the Muses by no means all lived in Milanese Grub-Street garrets. One poet wrote a sonnet on each invocation to the Virgin Mary in the litany. Another indited a hundred to a creditor to whom he owed three shillings. A third published sixty sonnets on a miser, 'written by Ser Lullo, Ser Lallo, and Ser Lello, with notes by Ser Lollo, and a dedicatory letter by Ser Lillo.' Verse was written on every sort of occasion—on births, deaths, and marriages, of course; on ladies' pets and lap-dogs; on christenings, confirmations, and first communions; on a nun's taking the veil, or her mother's taking a new *cicisbeo*; on the first sermons of young *abbati*; on professors' first lectures; on bets between the men and the changes in the distribution of a lady's beauty-spots. Two volumes of poetry were published on the death of a favourite cat; among which, says Cantù, the best was an epigram which may be Englished as follows with tolerable fidelity:—

An Iliad written
On the death of a kitten,
In rhymes that are faultless if not very new,
May teach you, musicians,
Actors, poets, physicians,
To prize at its worth the verse lavished on you.

In truth, it would be difficult to imagine a more effete and worthless condition of society than that of Milan at that period. Probably things were even worse in Milan than in the other cities of Italy. Milan was less Italian. The change from Italian manners to Spanish had been a change very much for the worse. And now—at the time, that is, when Parini was frequenting the salons of the Milanese aristocracy—the tone of morals, manners, and fashion was worse than even Spanish pomp and the stupidity of exclusive pride had made it; for it was beginning to be largely infected by French influences, and a worse amalgam than that produced by Spanish ignorance, laziness, stiffness, formalism, and pride on the one side, and French dissoluteness, frivolity, and licence on the other, it would be hard to conceive. The Austrian influences were at the same time used, as far as intention went, for good. The governors were always attempting to bridle the universal and increasing dissoluteness and immorality of the time; but it was all done after the old fashion, the uselessness of which we can understand now, because we have come into the world

some scores of years later. The main errors consisted in an unbounded and unfailing belief in the efficacy of police legislation, and an incapacity to understand that laws produce other secondary and oblique effects besides those which they are enacted for the purpose of producing.

The state of morality, though by no means such as would have seemed at all satisfactory to English ideas of the present time, had been, during the prevalence of Spanish ways and manners, prevented from becoming outrageously, or at all events openly, licentious, by the almost claustral severity of those domestic habits which the Spaniards had learned from Moorish jealousy and the notions of female propriety imported from the East. But then came an irruption of new ideas from France; and the irruption came upon a society whose sole ideas of right, virtue, and propriety consisted in a traditional blind obedience to a code of formal rules, the absurdity of which was beginning to be perceived and the burden of which was beginning to be felt to be intolerable. And the ideas which proclaimed a sudden liberation from all the traditional rules by which morality had up to that time been regulated, came inextricably bound up in the same bundle with the ideas which promised that freedom from tyrannies in other departments of life for which the best and wisest were sighing. Can it be wondered at if the result was a disastrous one?

Under the Spanish rule the custom of getting rid of the daughters of noble families by making nuns of them was almost universal. It would have been difficult to find any one of the great families which had not several of its female members in the different cloisters of the city. As children they were sent to nunneries to be educated—very likely to some house of which an aunt or other relation was the superior—and from their earliest years every effort was made to lead them to fear and detest ‘the world,’ and to look upon a cloistered life as the best and happiest lot that fate could have in store for them. And for the most part such a system of tactics was successful; and the young girl, her mind having been operated upon much as is the foot of a high-bred Chinese beauty, took the vows readily enough. But there were not wanting instances of tragedies, which in various ways from time to time startled the minds of parents with partial and transitory glimpses of the real nature of the system. There are many anecdotes of such cases still preserved in Milanese records or memoirs. One such may suffice. It tells of a girl compelled to take the veil against her will, who, when the fatal words had been pronounced, begged to speak with her parents across the

grating of the *parlatorio* before they left the convent; and when the request was granted, first loaded them with a torrent of imprecations and then strangled herself before their eyes, but behind the grating, with some part of the fastenings of her dress.

In such a condition of things it was quite a matter of course that marriages in the upper ranks of society were made wholly and avowedly in accordance with motives dictated by considerations of family interest and family pride. Girls were brought out of the cloister in which they had been educated only to be married to men whom they had never before seen, and who were almost always very much their seniors. Quite a matter of course was it also, and quite inevitable, that relief from the misery of such marriages should have been sought in the universal prevalence of the institution known as 'cicisbeism.' Every lady had her 'cicisbeo.' It would have been both ridiculous and disgraceful to be without one. The name of the person agreed upon by the husband previously to his marriage, as one whom he should not object to see in this relationship to his future wife, was frequently mentioned in the marriage settlement. It was disgraceful in a lady not to be faithful in her affections to her 'cicisbeo.' But the service expected from the person thus honoured was not a little rigorous. He was always to attend the lady's levée. He was to bring her the news of the city for the day. He was to keep her servants in good order. He was to attend her every morning to mass; to lift the heavy curtain that hangs inside the doors of the churches for her to pass; to dip his fingers in the holy water, and present the sanctifying drop to her on the tips of them; to place a chair for her on the marble pavement; to hand her her prayer book; to wait, holding her fan, her essence bottle, or what not, till she had finished her devotions, then to receive her prayer book; holy water and curtain as before; and then to give her his arm to her palace. He must never fail to accompany her to whatever place of amusement or party she might attend in the evening. The position of 'cicisbeo' to a devout and fashionable lady—and all the ladies were devout and almost all of them fashionable—was, it will be observed, by no means a sinecure. The laws of Milanese society, however, absolutely required that every gentleman who had any pretension of belonging to it should be the faithful and devoted servant of some lady—any lady save his own wife. And it would have been equally ridiculous in a man to be without any such mistress as for a woman to be unfurnished with a 'cicisbeo.' Much has been said about the degrees of innocence which are compatible with the existence of these ties, and the degrees of guiltiness which they must be held to have

involved. Baretti, among others, who was so well known once upon a time in the London world, and whose book upon the Italians was once widely read, tries hard to show that in Milan these usages, for the most part, led to no results of the kind which are ordinarily stigmatised as guilt. It is impossible rather than difficult to believe that such could be the truth in the great majority of cases, but it is very possible that in some it may have been as he has represented. But none the less—perhaps even all the more—was the system a demoralising and degrading one; none the less were the women prevented from discharging the duties of wives or mothers; none the less were the men taught and led to spend their days in a round of frivolity, fribbledom, and idleness, utterly emasculating in its results upon the character, utterly destructive of all civic worth and of every sentiment of moral dignity; none the less was all domestic happiness, in the best and only true sense of the term, rendered impossible.

The pulpit furnished one of the favourite dissipations of the time. Of course not even Spanish severity of etiquette could forbid a lady to attend church. One sermon of the time which has been preserved contains the most accurate and detailed description of the dances most in vogue, and the manners of a ball-room, that remains to us. Another celebrated preacher, one Father Granelli, a Jesuit, whom Maria Teresa employed to restore the fashion of Italian sermons at Vienna, was especially famous for the neat skill with which he could interrupt his sermon to pay an appropriate compliment to any person of distinction who might chance to enter the church in the course of the preaching, and then gracefully resume the thread of his discourse. The dress of the period, before French novelties came to improve it into indecency, might have seemed to have been invented with the scope of impeding as much as possible every movement of the body, and of requiring as much time as possible in the putting it on and the getting it off again. In the case of either sex it was enormously stiff, heavy, cumbrous, and pompous. The women wore silks and brocades nearly as solid and massive as boards, and of exceeding richness. But a dress lasted a lifetime, and very often passed from mother to daughter. The dressing of the hair, for both men and women, was perhaps the most important part of the whole business of the toilette, as it was certainly that which consumed the most time. The use of powder was universal, and the importance attached to success in causing it to fall with the utmost possible lightness on the elaborately arranged hair, and to the perfectly equal distribution of it, was such that no means of attaining the end in view was thought sufficiently efficacious save

imitating the fall of the snow from heaven. An apartment was, therefore, provided in well-ordered palaces specially destined and adapted to this operation. The patient entered, covered from neck to foot with a large sheet; a floury shower began to fall, and in a few minutes he emerged more than half smothered by the dust-laden atmosphere, but with the exquisite architecture of his curls powdered *à ravir*, and not a hair displaced from its artistically ordained position.

Pietro Verri, writing about the middle of the century, published 'An Account of a Prodigious Comet observed at Milan in the Year 1763,' the meteor in question being the hair of a noble lady who appeared in society adorned by such a *chef-d'œuvre* of hair-dressing art.

'The last of the ostensible daily occupations of our fathers,' writes an author describing the times in question in a subsequent generation, 'was the winding-up of their watches, which was no small affair, inasmuch as every gentleman carried two and each watch had two cases. Everything was double in those blessed times—two watches, two handkerchiefs, two snuff-boxes.'

'But of all the classes,' the same writer continues at a subsequent page, 'the most intensely formalist in its customs, in its ideas, in its habits, was that of the *abbati*, who furnished the inspiration for so many satires and so many songs, who were objects of curiosity, of admiration, and of delight to the fair sex, who examined them with as much attention and wonder as a young botanist accords to a plant of mandragora.' The *abbati*, indeed, played a large and conspicuous part in the society of which we have been speaking. There was no place, public or private, sacred or profane, where an *abbate* was not privileged to enter. The curiosity with which, as the above-cited author tells us, the fair sex was wont to regard them was not seldom mingled with, or passed into, a sentiment of a more tender description. And on this point, again, the apologists of the old society assure us that these clerical gallantries were the most innocent things on earth. The reverend gentlemen in question *pretended* only to do and to be many of the things which they were supposed to do and to be; and it is extremely possible that in very many cases they only pretended to be dying for love of the bright eyes, and fascinating smiles, and well-turned ankles, to which they passed their lives in pouring forth floods of verse. Romantic attachments between clerical lovers, secular or regular, and cloistered nuns very frequently, we are told, helped to render less intolerable the lives of the latter; and we are assured that these affections, however romantic, however passionate, however spoken of by the parties to

them in the ordinary language of the most entirely mundane galleantry, were for the most part Platonic in their nature and, in the conventional language which people apply to such subjects, 'innocent.' Those who have ever looked into De Potter's 'Life of Ricci,' the reforming Bishop of Pistoia, will know how far to believe this representation.¹

It was as one of this petted and privileged caste of *abbati* that Parini moved among the gay society of Milan—a poor man, it is true, and one who had to make his daily bread by the exercise of his wits, instead of being one of those sleek, wealthy, and courtly sons of the Church who had absolutely nothing to do but to make themselves agreeable in the salons they frequented. Parini had, however, many points in his favour. Several have been already mentioned. Besides these, he had already become favourably known to the worthy Austrian governor Firmian, who showed himself the poet's steadfast friend and patron.

A very amusing story, by-the-by, has been recorded of an attempt which the good governor made to improve the fortunes of his protégé, and of the result of it. The method which his Excellency hit upon of helping a starving poet is excessively amusing in the intensity of its Austrian and bureaucratic modes of thinking. Governor Firmian appointed the poet to be editor of the 'Official Gazette.' Parini set to work in the office assigned to him, nothing loth; and it is not recorded that the Government organ was observed to suffer in any notable degree from the roundness of the man who had been put into that very square hole the official editorship. But it so happened that one day a tailor about to measure a customer who lived at or near Parini's office had provided himself with no measures for the purpose. Now, Parini was in the habit of placing slips of MS. on a certain bench, in readiness for the printer to take them for the making up of the journal; and there the tailor, at a loss for some paper to snip up into measures, saw them, snatched them up, and in a moment converted them to his own base uses. Of course there was a *hiatus valde deplendus* in the 'Gazette.' What was to be done? Parini in haste seizes his pen, and, *inspirante diavolo*, invents and scribbles off, as the latest news from Rome, a detailed statement to the effect that the reigning Pontiff, Clement XIV., no other than Voltaire's correspondent, the celebrated Ganganelli, determined to put an end to the scandal which had been given to Europe for so many years by the mode in which, as is well known, singers were prepared to take the *soprani* parts in the music performed in the

¹ A portion of the above account of the Milanese society of the eighteenth century has been borrowed from a work by the present writer published many years ago.

Pope's chapel, had given orders for the discontinuance of it. The interesting news was forthwith printed. The 'Gazette of Leyden' copied it; and from that paper, then one of the most widely circulated in Europe, the tidings were spread over the whole of Europe. Great praise was everywhere bestowed upon the reforming Pontiff. Voltaire wrote him a letter of congratulation on the subject. The sequel of the story, if it had any sequel, has not been preserved to us; but it may be concluded that worthy Governor Firmian discovered that he had been putting a round peg into a square hole.

But the poet was all the while preparing for the work which has achieved for him the place he still holds in the estimation of his countrymen. *Facit indignatio versus!* And as Parini walked among the denizens of that world which has been described, from the morning hours at the male or female toilet table to the turning of the last trick at the card table at night, there was not a folly, a vice, or an absurdity that he was not noting, or a day that did not add to his indignation and the ever-growing desire to chastise a world which so grievously needed it. With these feelings urging him to the task, Parini planned the 'Giorno,' a poem to be divided into four parts or cantos, severally entitled the 'Mattino,' the 'Meriggio,' the 'Vespro,' and the 'Notte'—the Morning, Noon, Evening, and Night. The subject was to be a detailed description of the day of a Milanese noble, male and female: how abundant and provocative a field for satire of the most scathing kind the foregoing notices of the social system to be anatomised may enable the reader to judge.

It was a great question with Parini whether his projected satire should be written in classical Tuscan or in the Milanese dialect; and the ardent defence of the latter which Parini had, as has been told, undertaken in opposition to the classicists would lead one to anticipate that he would have chosen the dialect of his native province as the vehicle for his satire. There were other reasons for thinking that he would have been led to make that choice. There would, as may readily be imagined, be many things to be said which it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to say in accordance with the unbending rigidity of the Della Cruscan rules of literary, and especially poetical, propriety. The pedantry which for many generations made it impossible that 'Othello' should be presented on the Italian stage, because there was no means of naming in tragedy so unheroic an article as a pocket-handkerchief, made it excessively difficult to treat such subjects as Parini had to deal with. Then, again, of course the poet's primary object was to address himself to his Milanese fellow-citizens; and

it was not to be doubted that such a form as he meditated would command a degree of immediate popularity greater than any that could be expected for a work written in Tuscan Italian. For it must be understood that the dialect spoken by the Milanese was by no means merely the language of the populace. It was the universal vernacular of all classes. Classical Tuscan Italian was the language of literature only. If Tuscany and Rome had been expunged from the map of Italy, it would not have been a spoken language at all. And in Lombardy, as in the other provinces of the peninsula, though the educated and the cultivated could read, and perhaps some of them could speak, Tuscan Italian, even they, as was natural, read with greater enjoyment and readiness their own provincial tongue. It was in every province a matter of *amour propre* also. To every Lombard, Piedmontese, Venetian, Neapolitan, his own dialect was the dearest, the most delightful, the most vigorous, the most melodious, the best in all respects of all the many forms of Italian. A work of note written in any one of these was cherished by the author's fellow-citizens with especial pride and satisfaction. It was a possession of their own, in which the 'foreigners' of cities a hundred miles or so away had no share. It was exclusively their own.

Nevertheless all these strong considerations, though they made him hesitate, did not avail to induce Parini to decide finally in favour of writing in Milanese. He looked round on a wider horizon, and especially looked forward to other days than his own. The probability is that the nature of his subject was of so 'burning' a quality, and came so closely home to the hearts and feelings of every class of his contemporaries, that the amount of attention excited by the appearance of the 'Mattino' could hardly have been greater than it was had it been written in the choicest Milanese. But if anything was lost in this way Parini's wider ambition has its reward. He would hardly have been known beyond the confines of his native province had he chosen the easier and readier path, and assuredly his name would never have been found on the roll of unforgotten Italian poets.

Other difficulties, however, of a totally different character, attended the publication of satire—or at all events of such satire as Parini's—in those days, difficulties of a twofold nature. In the first place there were the authorities, and in the next place the satirised, to be counted with. The Austrian governors, it is true, were abundantly aware of the degraded and rotten condition of the social world over which they presided, and were not without anxiety for the amelioration of it; but it was by no means consistent with their ideas of government that any man should write

and publish that which was like to set the citizens by the ears together merely because he was aminated by a desire to read a lesson to a society which much needed one. But, fortunately for us and for Italian letters, Governor Firmian was a man of sense, and was, moreover, fond of Parini; and when it was mentioned to him by a friend of the poet that he had composed a poem the scope of which was to describe in detail the entire occupation of a Milanese noble's day, and was purposing to publish it, 'So much the better,' said Governor Firmian; 'I am sure enough that it is greatly needed.'

It seemed likely at first that the other danger to which satirists were exposed would have been found in Parini's case to be a more formidable one. The publication of the 'Mattino' caused a commotion in the fashionable world of Milan, such as a bomb-shell falling in the midst of a crowd might occasion. When it was seen how utterly contemptible the hero of the new poem was represented to be, each leading member of the society forthwith insisted that *he* must have been the original from whom the portrait was drawn. The Prince Belgiojoso of that day was one of the most exquisite of the 'exquisites' of Milan, 'the glass of fashion and the mould of form, the observed of all observers.' Who could it be but he whose occupations and pursuits from morning to evening were described with such lifelike exactitude in this audacious *abbate's* poem? And we are told accordingly that he caused Parini to be warned not to proceed any further with his 'Day' if he had any care for his own days; for that if he dared to publish his 'Noon,' which was to form the second portion of the poem, he should himself assuredly never see the evening. And it must be remembered that in those days and in that country such a threat was very readily carried into execution by a man in the position of the Prince Belgiojoso, without any necessity for soiling his own hands with the dirty work of assassination or any danger of coming into collision with the laws. All that was needed for him to do was to pay.

Nevertheless the 'Noon,' the 'Evening,' and the 'Night' were published in due course; and the audacious poet died in his bed when his time came. It is probable that the fact that the poet was known to, and valued by, the governor contributed not a little to this happy result.

If such satire as that of Parini was calculated to expose its author to personal danger, the intensity of the social commotion caused by the publication seems to have secured for it a degree of attention which enabled its author to deal with his publisher on *some* better terms than such as, it has been seen, were

common in those days. The following curious letter from Parini to the publisher—Colombani, of Venice—will be read with interest. Venice, it may be remarked, had then been famous as a centre of publishing and printing enterprise for more than a hundred years; and when the Republic had utterly refused to recognise the validity of the Papal prohibition of works of doubtful orthodoxy, the motive which actuated the Venetians was not so much any tenderness for heresy as a determination that their printing, paper-making, and publishing trades should not be injured.

The letter is dated, Milan, September 10, 1766:—

It was by mistake that I offered you my 'Noon.' Signor Graziosi [a Milanese publisher] had written to me requesting me to deal with him for it; and, as it happened that it was a long time before I replied to him, I forgot the name and put Colombani instead of Graziosi. [Not a very satisfactory excuse, it may be thought.] However, I am not sorry for the mistake, seeing that I have the same esteem for you that I have for Signor Graziosi. As to my 'Sera,' I have pretty well given up all thought of it. Not that I should not like to complete the three little poems announced by me [it must be supposed that the 'Notte' was not yet thought of, or perhaps the writer may allude to an announcement of the 'Noon,' the 'Evening,' and the 'Night,' made after the publication of the 'Morning'], but I am disgusted by the greediness and intrigues of the printers. Not only have they reprinted everywhere the other two poems [the 'Morning' and the 'Noon'], but they have done so without any communication with me, without so much as sending me a copy or giving me an opportunity of correcting an error. This poem, the 'Sera,' is scarcely begun; and I have not taken any trouble to go on with it, seeing that I cannot expect any advantage from it. And, unless I am tempted to proceed, I shall probably never finish it. I do not object to your proposals; and with regard to them I answer that it is my intention to bring out an elegant edition of all the three little poems [the 'Notte,' it would seem, was not contemplated at this time] when the work shall be completed. If, then, you feel disposed to undertake it, I offer to put the completed MS. of the 'Sera' into your hands by the beginning of next spring, and that of the other two poems at the same time, corrected and improved in many places. The price I ask, with the intention of not abating a stiver, is one hundred and fifty zechins, to be paid one-third on the conclusion of the contract and the remainder on the delivery of the MS. If you are not contented with those terms do not trouble yourself to write any further about it. I have been induced to answer your letter by the civility with which you write to me. I have not done as much for several other publishers, and two or three Venetians among them, who have presumed to make me offers such as are proposed to the makers of almanacs. To the vulgar letters of such people I shall never trouble myself to reply. I will do my utmost to assist the circulation of your journal. And with much esteem I am, &c.,

G. PARINI.

Peremptory as is the tone which the poet adopts in the above letter, Cantù says, though without telling us what his grounds for thinking so are, that Parini did not ever receive the 150 zechins.

The economically unfortunate position of literary men in Italy

at that time, which in truth is but little, though certainly somewhat, ameliorated at the present day, is curiously illustrated in various passages from certain letters of Baretti, which are the more interesting from the contrast with the state of things in England, which his competent knowledge of our country enabled him to expose to his correspondents. 'Would you believe it,' he says, writing to a Milanese friend in 1765, 'that in Rome, *caput mundi*, and in Florence, *caput sapientiæ*, I have not been able to sell ten copies of my "Letters" and of my "Frusta" ? You may judge, then, how it must have been in other cities. You have no idea what our publishers are ; and we must pass through their hands.' Again in 1770, 'There are things I should like to write, but not in Italian—in English, if you will, for I get good guineas for them.' Again in 1777, 'I am disgusted to find that the reprints prevent Passeroni from getting the profit from his Cicero, which ought to come to him. But these numerous independent governments of ours are very unfavourable to our literature ; and to infinite mischief arising from this cause may be added the terrible dishonesty which flourishes with so rank a growth among all our *canaille*, in the number of whom I include every one of our printers.' It seems rather unreasonable to accuse the Italian publishers of causing the state of things complained of because each individual of them would not attempt to remedy by his own self-sacrifice the mischief caused by political misgovernment, especially as individual abstinence from reprinting would of course in no wise have mended matters. The following passage from the same letters is curious :—

In England, and especially at London, the writing of books is so thoroughly reduced to a profession that *the trade of an author* [sic in original] is a very common phrase in the mouths of Englishmen. Whoever has sufficient talent to cause his work to be bought by only as many as six or seven hundred persons in all that part of the island which is properly called England—no very difficult thing to do—has at once a nearly absolute certainty of being able to live honestly by his pen. . . . The insatiable avidity for reading new things which characterises the English, from the greatest lord and most fashionable lady down to the poorest little artisan and the most slatternly servant girl, demands continual food. Hence it is that more than four thousand pens in London alone are employed in furnishing the means of satisfying that enormous demand by means of *thirty abundantly well-filled Gazettes* [italics in original] under various titles, of innumerable pamphlets and magazines [*panfletti* in original—a word, I take it, to be found nowhere else in the language], and sheets in imitation of the 'Spectator,' and extracts from Holy Writ and from writings botanical and medical, and dictionaries printed in numbers, and literary and critical journals, and satires, and libels, and panegyrics, and romances, and history, and poetry, and infinite other matters. All this is sold by retail from day to day, from week to week, and from month to month, and all this without counting a large number of voluminous works published in the course

of each year. In fact, I do not think I should exaggerate in saying that more is printed in England in one week than in the course of a whole year in Italy. It is enough to observe that each sheet of a gazette sold pays one halfpenny English to the King, and that this exceedingly small tax brings in, as I am assured by credible and well-informed persons, a revenue of two hundred pounds sterling a day from the city of London alone.

Angry as a very large portion of the fashionable society of Milan was with the caustic poet, Parini's poem had made him a personage at Milan. We are told much by his contemporaries of the remarkable nobleness and dignity of his demeanour and bearing as he walked through the streets of the city, and this despite the malady or imperfection in the muscles of his feet, which caused him to be more or less lame all his life. He is spoken of as 'majestically limping' along the public ways. It was thus that Leopold II. of Austria once saw him in the street on the occasion of an imperial visit to Milan, and was so struck by his appearance that he asked who that specially dignified-looking personage was; and on being told that it was the celebrated poet Parini, he declared that it was scandalous that such a man should be obliged to walk afoot, and 'ordered' that a carriage should be supplied for him at the public cost. Such manifestations of imperial sympathy with literature may perhaps be judged to be admirable in every point of view save that of a public financier and political economist; but these inconveniences, if not scientifically understood, were practically remedied in those days by the simple method of paying no attention to such commands. And Parini walked afoot to the end of his days.

Before this, however, his good friend Governor Firmian had, soon after the discovery of his incompetency as a newspaper editor, placed him in a situation at least secured from the grinding poverty with which he had had to struggle in his earlier days. A new professorship of literature was created for him, despite the bitter opposition of the Jesuits, at the Palatine Schools in Milan, which he continued to hold till the institution was abolished, when he was appointed Professor of Eloquence at the Brera College. He subsequently became Professor of Fine Arts in the same establishment. His lectures were very numerous attended not only by his fellow-citizens, but by many who came from other parts of Italy for the purpose; and some of his lectures were published, and enjoyed a very high reputation among his contemporaries. These, with a work on the '*Principles of Belles-Lettres*' and a selection of other short pieces in prose, constitute the second of the two volumes of Parini's works in the Milan collection of Italian classics published in the early years of this century. But, however

much they may have excited the admiration of the author's contemporaries and countrymen, the pages of this second volume of his works are little likely to be ever much turned again.

The publication of them, however, at the time decidedly contributed to exalt the poet's social as well as his literary standing; and when the French invaded and conquered Lombardy, Parini was named a member of the municipality of Milan, an office which he held as long as it seemed to him that by doing so he could render any service to his fellow-citizens; and it is recorded that on quitting it he caused the whole of the emoluments he had received to be distributed to the poor of his parish. To have held office under the invader and usurper was of course no recommendation to the Austrian authorities when Lombardy again fell into their hands in 1799; and it indicates very significantly the high esteem in which he was held by all parties that not only was he in no wise molested by the Austrians on their return, but was allowed quietly to resume his lectures at the Brera, as if nothing had happened.

In truth, it is probable that Parini's real sympathies were with the Austrian Government rather than with that which had supplanted it, as, indeed, those of an honest man were likely to be. The former was beyond all comparison the better, the less corrupt, the less tyrannical of the two. Both were alike foreign invaders of the Italian soil; but 'Italy' really was then but 'a geographical expression,' and nobody objected to the Austrian rule on the ground that it was not Italian in those days. Practically those provinces of Italy that were subjected to it were by far the best governed part of the peninsula.

One or two *mots* of Parini have been preserved which serve to indicate that his affection for the invader whom he found himself obliged to serve was not of an enthusiastic character.

Some of the members of the Milanese municipality, after the absurd ideas and fashions of the time, insisted that all persons who appeared before them on business should keep their hats on. On one occasion a poor old peasant, who found it very difficult to overcome his lifelong habits of respectful bearing before his superiors, could with difficulty be persuaded to conform to the republican ordinance. 'My good man,' called out Parini, 'when you come here you must cover your head and look well to your pockets.'

At the troublous time when the French had just established their dominion the poet was wont to meet his friends in the morning with the query, 'Are you as honest a man this morning as you were yesterday?'

After the return of the Austrians Parini continued to live his quiet, studious life, lecturing at the Brera and enjoying the society of a knot of literary friends during the few months that remained to him. He had several of them with him when, on September 18, 1799, Dr. Jacopo Locatelli, his physician, calling to see him, told him that the hour of his departure, though probably not immediately imminent, was not far off. Parini returned to the room where his friends were and continued the conversation with the most perfect serenity. He was shortly afterwards attacked by a slight fit of nausea, and at the same time complained of a violent feeling of burning between the shoulders. 'Once upon a time,' said he, 'it would have been thought to be caused by an evil spirit; now nobody believes any more in evil spirits, nor in the Devil, and as little in God, in whom, however, Parini does believe.' And the incident is worth mentioning as a reply to the accusation of atheism, of which he has been accused in company with so very large a number of the men of that day whose lives showed that they were not thoroughgoing Churchmen.

The above words were the last spoken before his friends took leave of him at about two o'clock in the afternoon. A few hours later he laid himself upon his bed, and expired without pain or trouble a few minutes afterwards.

Such was the tranquil and little-eventful life of a poet whose home and habitual haunts were larger and more all-important factors in the production of his poetry than can be said to have been the case in any other Italian instance. Doubtless the greatest value of Parini's poem to readers of the present day consists in the fact that it is a faithful transcript of the very curious state of society in which he lived; but it is not *solely* on this account that the 'Giorno' deserves a larger share of attention than it meets with among English readers.

The Transfused Transformed.

A TALE OF BLOOD.

BY JAMES PAYN.

If you live in Downshire and do not know the ffiendells of ffiendell Court, you are unknown indeed; the circumstance of their name being spelt with two little fs, and pronounced Fendall, stamps it with a peculiar aristocracy. Radicals, indeed—persons who interest themselves in roots—assert that there was at one time no such thing as a capital in our alphabet, and that it was indicated by the duplication of the small letters. As intelligence increased, capitals were invented, and the last persons to use them were, of course, the most illiterate; so that the retention of the two small fs is not—intellectually speaking—a feather in the ffiendell cap. On the other hand, as a token of antiquity, it is invaluable. The possession of a name that nobody can pronounce without instruction is also obviously a great inheritance, and in this case it was the more valuable, since there is no record of a ffiendell of Downshire having been distinguished in any other way. The family had ‘flourished’ for centuries, in the sense that an old tree is said to flourish, and, like it, most of it was underground.

Sir Geoffrey Fendall (for we will take the liberty of spelling his name as it was pronounced, as though he were an ordinary Christian), the present tenant of the Court, was a widower, childless, and stricken in years. The long line, which had moved as directly as a pawn in chess for so many generations, had at last failed, and the succession was going aslant; nay, even zigzag—like the knight’s move—to a second cousin, young Percival Fendall, of Lincoln’s Inn, barrister-at-law. His father had subsisted on a very moderate property, the income from which had been in no way supplemented by the head of the family, and had bequeathed it in a reduced condition to his son. The former had discovered by bitter experience that the fact of his name being spelt with two fs did not enhance its financial value at the back of a bill; while the latter was seriously thinking of discarding the peculiarity altogether, as an affectation out of which nothing had ever come but ridicule, when suddenly old Geoffrey, acting under advice (not legal, but *medical*) to the fact of his heir-presumptive’s existence.

He wrote from Downshire with his own hand to invite Percival to Fendall Court.

Most young men would have jumped at such an offer, nor was Percival himself by any means blind to its possible advantages; but he was a man of that disposition which, in poor people, is called obstinacy, in persons of moderate means, firmness, and in rich people, determination of character. Thanks to nobody but himself, he was surely but slowly making his way in the world, and he was not disposed to barter his independence even for the reversion of the family estate. This was not entailed upon him, but it would have been contrary to all traditions of the house with two fs that Cousin Geoffrey should leave it to any other person than the natural heir. The young man knew, in fact, that unless he gave his kinsman some grave cause of offence, he would one day reign in his stead. Would it not be better, therefore, as he had not an idea in common with the old Squire, that they should keep apart, so that no offence could be given by him? Percival certainly did not wish to go to Downshire. It was November, and, since he was no sportsman, he greatly preferred London at that season to the country; just now, indeed, he preferred it at all seasons, from the circumstance that it contained, in Gloucester Place, a young lady called Mary Blake, whose name it was his intention to change to Fendall (with one F) as soon as his income had become sufficient for him to marry upon it.

Her father was a hop merchant, and no doubt given to speculation in his own line, but strongly opposed to contingencies in connection with his daughter's settlement in life. He had at first refused to take Percival's great expectations into consideration at all; but when this invitation came from the old Baronet he had visibly thawed, and even held out a hope that he might not now insist upon seeing Percival's ledger, setting forth that he had received in fees, &c., at least 500*l.* a year, before he would give consent to his daughter's marriage.

To the young man himself this relaxation of Mr. Blake's proviso gave much less satisfaction than that gentleman had anticipated. In his own mind he was persuaded that the match would be disagreeable to Sir Geoffrey, and render his expectations even less promising than before; and this was one of the reasons that made him incline to be very dutiful to his venerable cousin at a distance, and through the medium of the post-office. He did not like the old gentleman; he had resented the coldness he had shown to his father; and he did not appreciate the overtures now made to himself, which he thoroughly understood were not owing to any personal regard, but only because circumstances had made him the

sole surviving member of the house with two fs. At the same time he was much too sensible to throw away the brilliant prospects which had thus unfolded themselves to his view, if he could retain them with self-respect and without much inconvenience. Although a very unworthy descendant of his race as regarded the belief in their blue blood—which he looked upon either as imaginary, or as a very serious physical ailment—he had inherited a strong indisposition to be bored or troubled. Old Sir Geoffrey himself, with his 20,000*l.* a year and an obedient county, did not dislike being ‘put out’ more than he did, and when he was annoyed he took as little pains as his great kinsman to conceal it. Such men are, socially speaking, the very salt of the earth, who amongst a world of snobs and toadies speak the plain truth to its little tyrants, even if they do not succeed in teaching them how to behave themselves. But Percival had no sense of apostleship whatever. He simply liked his own way as much as his betters did, and—since his ambition was limited—almost as often got it: a man who did not walk, and look, and speak as if the street belonged to him, but rather as if he did not care one halfpenny (which was the case) to whom it did belong. Moreover, his father had been no ‘tenth transmitter of a foolish face,’ and this young fellow was as intelligent as he looked. He knew himself—it is only fools, notwithstanding what philosophers have said to the contrary, who do not—and was well aware that he would not make a favourable impression upon the owner of Fendall Court, and that was another reason why he was unwilling to go there.

That we should be able to keep at a distance the good people from whom we have expectations (and yet retain them) is, however, a mere dream of the optimist; and so Percival found it. To the polite and carefully-worded letter, by which he had endeavoured to evade the invitation to the home of his ancestors, he received a reply by return of post, the tone of which necessitated his immediate appearance at Fendall Court, or his giving up all hopes of ever seeing it his own; in short, Sir Geoffrey was furious.

‘Dear Percival, you had better go,’ pleaded Mary, to whom he had showed the note, with some strong expressions of indignation. She was a beautiful creature, with eyes like a gazelle, and a voice more persuasive to his ear than any in the Law Courts.

‘But he writes so disagreeably,’ said Percival, pulling at his moustache; ‘he must be a most offensive person.’

‘Recollect, my darling, that he is an old man,’ argued Mary, meaning that allowance, as well as reverence, was due to grey hairs.

‘He is not so old’

he mused Percival. ‘This sort of

thing may go on—I mean one's having to put up with his impertinent arrogance—for years and years. The question is, is it worth such a tremendous sacrifice?'

The wretch was thinking of his own peace of mind, and whether he could keep his temper if such things were said to him—about 'respect' and 'obedience'—as his kinsman had thought proper to put on paper.

'If you get on with your cousin,' she murmured, with a beautiful blush, 'dear papa would, I think, be more inclined to consent—that is—perhaps he would let us marry a little earlier.'

'You darling! that's true,' said Percival, 'and is worth going through almost anything for. I'll write and say I will run down to Downshire in the course of next week.'

'Don't write, dear—telegraph; and run down by to-night's train.'

'But I am to meet you at dinner, Mary, at the Joneses, on Saturday.'

'Never mind; don't let me be the cause of your running any risk of increasing Mr. Fendall's displeasure. I am sure I am giving you good advice. Go to-night.'

'Very good; I'll go.'

And Percival went accordingly.

Sir Geoffrey received him with a stately welcome, the coldness of which, however, was owing to the general frigidity of the establishment, rather than to any annoyance at his tardy obedience to his summons. Upon the whole, Percival's hesitation had perhaps done him good. If he had showed himself eagerly desirous to accede to his kinsman's wishes, it would probably have been set down by Sir Geoffrey to anything but disinterestedness, and might have even suggested Death—a subject very distasteful to the head of the fiendells. An independence of spirit which had eventually given way to his wishes was not unpardonable, for it exemplified the power of the will which had subdued it.

The Baronet himself volunteered to be the young man's guide over the picture gallery and the stables (the horse, we may be sure, was a favoured animal with him), and gave him to understand less by words than by his confidential tone that at some time or another, though at a date so distant that it would be absurd to allude to it, all these things might be his own—if he behaved himself.

It was well understood in Downshire that good behaviour in Sir Geoffrey's eyes was doing what Sir Geoffrey wished, and for three days Percival's behaviour was unexceptionable. On the fourth morning, however, it became infamous.

On the previous evening there had been a large dinner party, composed chiefly of the magnates of the county, who had treated the young barrister with a civility that had sufficiently indicated their opinion of his prospects; and the young ladies had been at least as gracious as their fathers and mothers.

'Percival, did you notice that girl in blue, last night?' enquired Sir Geoffrey, snipping off the end of his after-breakfast cigar and proceeding to light it: 'Amelia Elton, Lord Wraxall's daughter; it is my intention that you shall marry her.'

Percival lifted his eyebrows. 'It can't be done, Sir Geoffrey'—here he also lit his cigar with great deliberation—'that is, if I continue to live in England. We should have to go to Salt Lake City, where bigamy is permissible.'

'What the devil do you mean, sir?' exclaimed the Baronet. 'Have you a wife already?'

'No, Sir Geoffrey.' Percival could not help wondering to himself what would have happened had he answered 'Yes.' Would his cousin have had an apoplectic fit (he looked very near it as it was) and gone off the hooks at once, leaving everybody happy ever afterwards? or would he have sent for his lawyer and devised everything he had to the County Lunatic Asylum on the spot? Percival had felt that this crucial matter must crop up sooner or later, and had nerved himself for the encounter. 'I have no wife,' he went on; 'but, what is the same thing, Sir Geoffrey, so far as my future is concerned, I am engaged to be married.'

'What, to that hop-picker's daughter?' thundered the old man, who, it seemed, had been making keener enquiries into Percival's affairs than he had had any idea of.

'Well, sir, her father is a *hop-merchant*,' returned the young man coolly, 'and I dare say has made some pretty pickings; but I don't think he would like to be called a *hop-picker*. I may, perhaps, be allowed to add that your use of the term is not very polite to *me*.'

His face was very white, and looked all the whiter by comparison with his companion's, which was scarlet. They were both in a frightful rage, the one at a white heat, the other boiling.

'And who the deuce are *you*?' exclaimed Sir Geoffrey, in precisely the same tone (though he *was* such an aristocrat) as the butcher's boy used who, having run the leg of his wooden tray into the duke's eye, enquired of him: Who the deuce *he* was that he should be so particular about his eyesight?

'My name is Percival Fendall, sir. A man that boasts better blood than you, inasmuch as he can count a generation beyond you.' *This reply, intended to be satirical, was an inspiration, and had*

quite the contrary effect to what he had expected. He had accidentally protected himself as it were by this interposition of the other's fetish, as though it had been a shield.

'By Jove, that's true,' said Sir Geoffrey, regarding him with undisguised admiration. 'You're the eleventh of us, though not quite in the direct line. I am glad you appreciate the circumstance at its full value. I had been told by a mischievous fellow that you had been thinking of spelling our name with a capital F.'

'That would be blasphemy indeed,' said Percival, without moving a muscle.

'Of course it would,' put in the Baronet eagerly. 'I perceive that my informant was a liar. You are worthy of your name, and you were only joking—though let me observe that I don't like such jokes—when you talked of being engaged to this Miss Lake.'

'Blake, sir, is her name,' continued Percival, with unruffled calm; 'it is a very decent one, though she doesn't spell it with two little bs. She is a delicate-minded, honourable gentlewoman, and I mean to marry her.'

'What, without my consent?'

'No, Sir Geoffrey. I hope, with your consent. You have only to see her, and I venture to think you will confess that Miss—the young lady in blue, whom you were so good as to recommend to me—cannot hold a candle to her.'

'But her blood, sir? You, of all men, should understand the importance, the necessity, the indispensability——' The Baronet supplied in expression and gesture what was wanting to him in words.

'I do, Sir Geoffrey. Science has lately corroborated your opinion upon that point. To persons about to marry it recommends the microscope. Mary's blood shall be subjected to investigation.'

'What nonsense you talk! As if it could possibly be blood like ours! Beware how you trifle—or rather how you venture beyond trifling—with persons of this class. A blot on the 'scutcheon, remember, is ineradicable.'

'If a Fendall were to break his word, Sir Geoffrey, would not that be a blot on the 'scutcheon?'

It was cruel of Percival to place his kinsman on the horns of such a dilemma. But there is no fetish so utterly illogical—and, to say truth, so selfish and egotistical—as that of blood.

'The promise was extracted from you by passion,' answered the old man, 'and is therefore invalid.' Then, as if aware of the monstrosity of this position, he went hurriedly on—as after one has skimmed over thin ice—to paint the horrors of an unequal

marriage. 'Look at young Lascelles: if he had married as his uncle wished him, he might have stood for the county; a man whose ancestry is only second to our own, but who chose to throw himself away upon a female nobody; respectable, I dare say, she may be—her father lives in Baker Street, and is of the name of Jones. What was the result of it all? Why, young Lascelles was compelled to walk the hospitals.'

If he had been made to walk the plank, it is impossible that Sir Geoffrey could have spoken of the fact with more sincere compassion for the young man's unhappy fate.

'I know Lascelles,' said Percival cheerfully; 'he lives close to the Blakes.'

'Very likely,' put in Sir Geoffrey drily.

'And has already acquired a good practice,' continued the young man. 'He told me he is much happier than when he was subjected to his uncle's whims and caprices.'

This was a home thrust. Sir Geoffrey seized the bellrope to summon the footman to show his kinsman the door, but, by the time the menial entered, his master's passion had cooled down. He only said, 'Make up the fire.' The fact was that the notion of that extra generation which Percival had boasted of had seized on what the old Baronet 'called his mind,' and placed the young man in a position of positive superiority.

'Look here, Percival,' he said. 'Just to oblige you I'll see this young woman, and if I'm dissatisfied with her you must promise me to break off your engagement.'

'It is impossible that you should be dissatisfied with her,' said Percival, gallantly, but evasively.

The old gentleman had got an idea—rather an unusual event with the Fendalls—and hence it was the more to be regretted that it was unworthy of them. If he found this Mary Blake so 'honourable and delicate-minded' as Percival had described, he might work upon her feelings by representing that she was ruining the young man's prospects; if, on the other hand, she was mercenary, he might buy her off.

Accordingly, in due course Sir Geoffrey came up to London, and an interview was arranged between himself and Mary; after which Percival received the following letter:—

My dear Cousin,—Love has not blinded you, for I grant that the young person is very good-looking, but it has dulled your sense of hearing. Miss B. drops her *h*s—one *h* I can swear to; it was in 'hospital.' This is not her fault, of course, but her misfortune. It is in the blood. If you marry her—being what she is, and can't help being—you shall never have one acre of the ffiendell land, nor one shilling of the ffiendell money.

Yours faithfully,

G. ff.

The old Baronet would not have dared to write this but that he had, as he flattered himself, won over poor Mary to his side. He had painted to her the splendid prospects that awaited Percival, but which her marriage with him would dissipate for ever; and had appealed to her love itself to discard her lover.

He did not effect what he had hoped, but yet succeeded only too well. The thought that she would be the cause of her Percival's future being destroyed, preyed on her mind and produced a dangerous illness. Percival was heartbroken, and had only just spirit enough left to direct an envelope to Sir Geoffrey, enclosing a piece of his mind. It was an ugly fragment, and thus concluded:—

‘If through your infernal egotism my Mary dies, I will take out letters patent and change the idiotic name of ffiendell to Bullock-Smithy.’

Sir Geoffrey was reduced to despair by this frightful menace.

In the meantime poor Mary got weaker and weaker, and had hemorrhage from the lungs, or more probably the heart. The blood of the Blakes, though an inferior fluid, was necessary to her existence, and she was rapidly sinking. Dr. Lascelles, who was called in in consultation, said, ‘There is only one thing that can save this young lady's life. We must try transfusion.’

The other doctor—who was of the old school—shook his head as only doctors can.

Dr. Lascelles understood at once, from the great significance of the gesture, that he had never so much as heard of the operation.

‘I felt sure you would agree with me,’ he said, with the sweet smile that had won his way to professional success—for his practice lay chiefly among the ladies. ‘You remember Playfair's directions, without doubt?’ And he told him what they were. ‘One of us two must sustain this ebbing life.’

‘I think it had better be you,’ returned the other hastily. ‘There's nothing like new blood—I mean young blood.’

‘True; I am young and strong: I can't see a beautiful creature like this slipping through our hands.’ And he bared his arm to the other's lancet.

Two months afterwards Sir Geoffrey received the following letter from Percival, written under compulsion at his wife's dictation:—

Dear Cousin,—Actuated by feelings of passion, which, as you yourself once justly remarked, renders one's actions invalid, I addressed you a communication, some time ago, the terms of which I sincerely regret. When the blood of the

ffiendells is up they are apt to express themselves strongly; and you are the last man (except me) not to make allowances for the fact. I am thankful to say my dearest Mary has been raised from her bed of sickness, and is now—I had almost written ‘herself again;’ but though she is as well as ever, this is not the case. She has in a very singular, though perfectly scientific manner, become somebody else. She has undergone the operation of transfusion at the hands—or rather the arm—of Cavendish Lascelles, whose noble blood, to use the words of the poet, now ‘courses through her veins.’ One has so often heard of persons who are ready to shed the last drop of their blood for this or that, and so seldom seen them shed even the first drop, that you may have put them down in the same category with ghosts; but I saw this with my own eyes [for Percival had been present at the operation], and can swear to it. I owe a debt to Lascelles which I can never repay, for he brought back to life the dear girl I married yesterday. Both she and I are well convinced that our union will have your approbation, since the sole objection you had to it has been removed—by transfusion.

By birth, it is true, she is still a Blake, but by blood, she is a Lascelles.

With our united kind regards, I am yours truly,

PERCIVAL FFIENDELL.

Poor Sir Geoffrey, thus confronted not only with a dilemma, but an anomaly, was at his wit’s end—which was at no great distance.

In this extremity he consulted his oracle, an ancient nurse, who had dwelt in the household almost for that term of years scouted by Mr. Thoms, and who believed in the ffiendells first and Providence afterwards.

‘It’s my opinion, Sir Geoffrey,’ said this female sage, ‘as it’s no use crying over spilt milk.’

The Baronet himself was already partly of that opinion; so the reconciliation was effected, and the young couple were invited to the Court.

The bride, less from interested motives than from the sense that the old man had so much to ‘get over’ in his welcome to her, devoted herself to her host and soon surpassed her husband in Sir Geoffrey’s favour.

‘You are not only a ffiendell by name, my dear,’ he once said to her, ‘but, thanks to science, have become worthy of the race by nature. You were always very nice—in your way—but there were points before that fortunate operation—— But there,’ he added, patting her little hand, ‘we will not speak of them now.’

‘You mean I used to say “ospital” for “hospital,”’ she answered, ‘hanging her beautiful head,’ like the rose immortalized by Cowper. ‘But I was always taught to do that, and also to say “umble” for “humble.”’

‘My dear,’ he said quite gravely, ‘you used to drop all your *hs dreadfully*.’ (She spoke as purely as Lindley Murray.) ‘But

transfusion has picked them up for you. Depend upon it there is nothing like blood.'

Mrs. Percival Fendall was a woman, but she knew when not to have the last word.

'What is the use of arguing with people,' said she to her husband (when he called her a humbug), 'who spell their name with two little fs?'

‘Inexplicable Dumb-Shows.’

HAMLET treats scornfully ‘the groundlings,’ the pit of the Elizabethan period, when he describes them as ‘for the most part capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise.’ The old dramatists, indeed, were very prone to despise the playgoers occupying the pit, calling them now ‘understanding groundled men,’ and now ‘fools,’ or ‘scarecrows in the yard.’ The term *yard*, however, was peculiar to the public theatres, and related to the old system of performing in the enclosed yards of inns; the word *pit* applied only to the private theatres, roofed and furnished with seats, presenting entertainments of a more refined sort, and claiming the patronage of the superior classes.

Dumb-shows were generally supposed to prefigure the events about to be presented upon the scene, and had long been among the established customs of the theatre. Before each act of the play to be performed, the *dramatis personæ* came forward, and by means of eloquent gestures, postures, and glances typified the transactions in which they were about to engage. In his ‘History of English Poetry,’ Warton has expressed his surprise that this ‘ostensible comment of the dumb-show’ does not regularly appear in the tragedies of Shakespeare; while other critics have held that, because it is never formally described at the close or commencement of his acts, dumb-show was never introduced in the performance of his plays. It may be gathered from Hamlet’s speech that, with the groundlings at any rate, dumb-shows were certainly popular; and, as Warton writes, Shakespeare’s aim was to collect an audience, and for this purpose all the common expedients were necessary. No dramatic writer of his age has more battles or ghosts. His representations abound with the ‘useful appendages of mechanical terror,’ and he adopts ‘all the superstitions of the theatre.’ And it is concluded that if he dispensed with the aid of dumb-shows it was because he would not be entangled by the formality, or because he saw through the futility, of such unnatural and extrinsic ornaments. ‘It was not by declamation or by pantomime that Shakespeare was to fix his eternal dominion over the hearts of mankind.’

Dumb-shows were not, of course, intended to be ‘inexplicable;’ they were assuredly designed for the enlightenment of the spectators. But no doubt they were often of an obscure and mysterious character, and they gratified in that they were simply exhibitions of emblematic pageantry. Nor were they absolutely

confined to the foreshadowing of coming events; they sometimes served, we are told, 'as a compendious introduction of such circumstances as could not commodiously be comprehended within the bounds of representation.' They 'supplied deficiencies, and covered the want of business.' And occasionally they were employed to stop the breaches of the strict laws of dramatic composition, to remedy neglect of the unities of time and place. Our early dramatists were not wont to be heedful of classical prescriptions in that regard, and dumb-shows occupied the scene, 'while a hero was expected from the Holy Land, or a princess was imported, married, and brought to bed.' The dumb-show preceding the fourth act of Lord Buckhurst's '*Gordobuc*,' the first specimen in our language of a regular tragedy—an heroic story, written in blank verse, and divided into acts and scenes—takes almost the form of a distinct masque. First the music of hautboys is heard, then there come forth from beneath the stage, 'as though out of hell,' three Furies, Alecto, Megera, and Ctesiphone, clad in black garments, sprinkled with blood and flames; their bodies girt with snakes, their heads 'spread with serpents instead of hair;' the one bearing in her hand a snake, the other a whip, and the third a burning fire-brand; each driving on a king and a queen, 'which, moved by Furies, unnaturally had slain their own children;' the names of these kings and queens being Tantalus, Medea, Athamas, Ino, Cambises, and Althea. The stage direction proceeds: 'After that the Furies and these had passed about the stage thrice, they departed, and then the music ceased. Hereby was signified the unnatural murders to follow, that is to say: Porrex slain by his own mother, and of King Gordobuc and Queen Viden killed by their own subjects.' Warton points out a resemblance between this 'visionary procession of kings and queens long since dead' and the train of royal spectres in the tent scene of Shakespeare's '*Richard the Third*.'

The dumb-show preceding the fifth act of '*Gordobuc*' is curious for its anachronistic character. The events of the story are supposed to occur six hundred years before Christ; nevertheless, firearms are brought upon the scene and freely employed. The stage direction runs: 'First the drums and flutes begin to sound, during which there come forth upon the stage a company of hargabusiers and of armed men all in order of battle. These, after their pieces discharged and that the armed men had three times marched about the stage, departed, and then the drums and flutes did cease. Hereby was signified tumults, rebellions, arms and civil wars, as fell in the realm of Great Britain, which, by the space of fifty years and more, continued in civil war between the nobility after the death of King Gordobuc, and of his issue,' &c. However,

the period of the story of Hamlet, so far as it can be assigned to any precise period, did not preclude Shakespeare from introducing 'a peal of ordnance,' and referring to a 'petard.' In 'Gordobuc,' the employment of music as an aid to the dumb-show is worth noting. The first act is preceded by 'music of violence;' before the second act 'music of cornets' is sounded; and before the third, 'music of flutes.' The dumb-show may be considered as performing in part the functions of the chorus of the ancient drama. In addition to its dumb-show, however, 'Gordobuc' is supplied with a chorus of 'four ancient and sage men of Britain,' who at the close of each act point the moral of its incidents, comment upon the proceedings of the characters, and express reprobation or sympathy as the case may seem to require.

If no directions as to dumb-shows appear in Shakespeare's tragedies, the poet has yet been careful to preserve this old custom of the stage when a theatrical exhibition formed part of his subject, as in 'Hamlet' and 'A Midsummer Night's Dream.' The 'tedious brief scene of young Pyramus and his love Thisbe,' presented for the entertainment of Duke Theseus and his bride, is preceded by a prologue delivered by a fellow, who, as Theseus says, 'doth not stand upon points.' Pyramus and Thisbe, Wall, Moonshine and Lion, are then instructed to enter 'as in dumb-show.' There is no direction, however, as to the method of this show, nor does it appear that the performers by their actions anticipated the distresses of their tragedy. It is, perhaps, part of the humour of their dumb-show that they show nothing. In the prologue it is stated:

The actors are at hand, and by their show,
You shall know all that you are like to know.

After they have entered they stand mute while the 'prologuier' resumes his discourse, introducing them severally, naming them, and describing the deeds they are about to do. His speech concluded, the mirthful tragedy is formally commenced.

In 'Hamlet' the dumb-show precedes the prologue to the 'Murder of Gonzago.' 'Hautboys play,' so the folios direct; in the quartos the words are, 'the trumpets sound;' then comes the dumb-show. 'Enter a king and queen very lovingly; the queen embracing him and he her. She kneels and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up and declines his head upon her neck; lays him down upon a bank of flowers; she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the king's ear, and exit. The queen returns; finds the king dead, and makes passionate action. The poisoner, with some two or three mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried

away. The poisoner woos the queen with gifts ; she seems loth and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love.' This dumb-show, it need hardly be said, has not been preserved upon the modern stage, nor has its revival ever been urged by even the most resolute sticklers for textual performance. The actors so curiously described as mutes, all being mute for the occasion, were no doubt supernumeraries, who were not entrusted with speech even in the tragedy itself.

It may be thought that this dumb-show, so clearly described, would have proved explicable enough to the spectators, or that they would at any rate have obtained from it some inkling of the nature of the exhibition to follow. But they remained wholly in the dark. Ophelia vaguely asks what the dumb-show means ? And to Hamlet's reply that it 'means mischief,' she adds an innocent surmise that possibly it may 'import the argument of the play.' Then the prologuise enters. 'We shall know by this fellow,' says Hamlet. The prologue, however, consists of but three lines. It is not until the play is fairly in progress that Claudius and Gertrude manifest any uneasiness. But the queen begins to think that the lady doth protest too much ; and the king adds an inquiry touching the argument—'Is there no offence in it ?' Clearly he had gathered little from the dumb-show, or, conjecturing with Ophelia that it imported the argument, had nevertheless failed to grasp its meaning.

If dumb-shows were inexplicable to the groundlings, they were yet something to look at. The actors in their stage-dresses formed groups and fell into attitudes, and no doubt grimaced a good deal, and when companies of 'hargabusiers' discharged their firearms upon the stage there must certainly have been noise enough. To the poorer classes of playgoers unprovided with seats and standing for some hours in a damp, unroofed inn-yard, this practical sort of entertainment was no doubt more attractive than the divinest flights of poetry. But dumb-shows as a portion of the performances of the superior theatres were probably declining in Shakespeare's time, although they may long have survived in the representations of strolling companies. Indeed, some connection may have existed between the dumb-shows of Elizabeth's time, and those 'parades' of the entire company, variously dressed for performance, which were wont to occur upon the exterior platforms of such peripatetic theatres as Gyngell's or Richardson's, while the gong sounded and the manager through a speaking-trumpet informed the public that the performance was just 'going to begin.'

On the French stage our old English dumb-show had no exact counterpart; but *curious mingling* of the spoken and the mute drama

distinguished the *comédie-ballet* of Molière, for instance. Comedy in France has been from time to time subject to adulteration, now with singing, the result being *comédie-vaudeville*, and now with dancing as in *comédie-ballet*. The Duchesse du Maine, celebrated for those *Nuits de Sceaux*, or *Nuits Blanches*, which Louis XIV.'s nobles found so delightful, is said to have invented the dramatic ballet or *ballet d'action*, and the success enjoyed by this form of entertainment may have led to much tacking on of dances to works that did not really need such additions. Between each act of 'Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme,' ballets are introduced so far connected with the story that the dancers are now the tailors and now the cooks of M. Jourdain, and now the Turks and dervishes who have taken part in mystifying him. In these *intermèdes* the tailors 'se réjouissent, en dansant, de la libéralité de M. Jourdain;' the cooks conclude their dance by carrying on a table 'couverte de plusieurs mets,' to be of service in the next act of the play, so that the ballets after a fashion assisted the conduct of the story. The *intermède* following the first act of 'Le Malade Imaginaire,' however, seems altogether irrelevant to the drama, and is to be ascribed to the popularity of Italian pantomime. Polichinelle is introduced, to sing a serenade to an old woman at a window, to be disturbed by a band of violins, to be beaten by a troop of archers who finally execute a joyful dance; nor is the story much assisted by the second *intermède*, songs and dances by Egyptians and Moors, the entertainment being provided for the diversion of Argan by his brother Béralde. 'Je vous amène ici un divertissement que j'ai rencontré, qui dissipera votre chagrin, et vous rendra l'âme mieux disposée aux choses que nous avons à dire. Ce sont des Egyptiens vêtus en Mores, qui font des danses mêlées de chansons, où je suis sûr que vous prendrez plaisir; et cela vaudra bien une ordonnance de M. Purgon. Allons!' The third *intermède* is described as 'une cérémonie burlesque d'un homme qu'on fait médecin, en récit, chant et danse.' The stage is crowded with physicians, surgeons and apothecaries, who examine the candidate, admit him to their ranks, march to and fro in procession, and sing and dance to the accompaniment of musical instruments, the clapping of hands, and the tinkling and clanging of pestles and mortars. It was while playing in this last *intermède*, on the fourth representation of 'Le Malade Imaginaire,' that Molière was attacked by the convulsive fit which terminated fatally an hour after his removal from the theatre. He had been ailing for some time previous, and an effort had been made to dissuade him from appearing. 'C'est impossible,' he said; 'il y a cinquante pauvres ouvriers qui n'ont que leur journée pour vivre; que feront-ils si je ne joue pas?'

Singing and dancing were, no doubt, more prominent ingredients than dumb-show in the constitution of these *intermèdes*, which must assuredly have overpowered considerably the interest of the dramas they were supposed to embellish. But the fashion of the time demanded that the glories of Louis le Grand should be hymned, and that Flora, Zephyr and Pan, Daphnis and Daphne, and flocks of Dresden-china-looking shepherds and shepherdesses should occupy the scene for some time before discussion could be permitted even of such prosaic subjects as the hypochondriacism of Argan, or the follies and misadventures of Monsieur le Pourceaugnac; and that further interruption of a fantastic kind should occur at every pause in the performance, to occupy the spectators between the acts and prevent any cessation of amusement. In Molière's *comédie-ballet* in five acts, 'Les Amans Magnifiques,' Louis XIV. himself took part, appearing as Neptune in the first *intermède*, and as the Sun in the last, singing and dancing, playing now the flute and now the guitar, attended by heralds, trumpeters, priests, priestesses, Pythians, Tritons, Waves, Cupids, nymphs, dryads, fauns, and satyrs. The king, indeed, greatly prided himself upon his histrionic abilities; he had quite a repertory of parts, and gave himself all the airs of a popular comedian in the way of bidding adieu to the stage only to return to it again at an early opportunity. 'Les Amans Magnifiques,' a very splendid spectacle enriched with music by Lulli, was first played at St. Germain in 1670. The second *intermède*, which follows the first act—for the play begins after an odd fashion with an *intermède*—is thus described: 'La confidente de la jeune princesse lui produit trois danseurs sous le nom de *pantomimes*, c'est-à-dire qui expriment par leurs gestes toutes sortes de chose. La princesse les voit danser, et les reçoit à son service.' In another *intermède* the confidant begs that these mimes may reappear, so that by their skill in expressing the passions they may relieve the distresses of the princess. Eriphile gives a sad sort of consent. 'Let them do what they will,' she says, 'provided they leave me to my own thoughts.' Thereupon the four pantomimists enter and 'pour éprouver de leur adresse, ajustent leurs gestes et leurs pas aux inquiétudes de la jeune princesse Eriphile.' Certainly there is something arbitrary about the manner of introducing these pantomimists: the excuse for their presence in the play is scarcely sufficient. But the precedent thus furnished has been followed in innumerable dramas of which dancing and pantomime formed part. It may be remembered that Nicholas Nickleby, being new to the business, was perplexed how to introduce into his adaptation from the French a ballet for the Infant Phenomenon and Mr.

Lenville. 'There's nothing easier than that,' observed Mr. Lenville, who was cast for the part of an attached and faithful servant in attendance upon an ill-treated wife (Mrs. Crummies) and her daughter (the Infant Phenomenon), and compelled to seek refuge with them in poor lodgings. And he advises that the lady, overcome by the misery of her position, should sink into a chair in the poor lodgings and bury her face in her pocket-handkerchief. The child and the faithful servant are then to ask the cause of her tears with a view to raising her spirits. 'Oh, Pierre!' says the distressed lady, 'would that I could shake off these painful thoughts.' 'Try ma'am, try,' says the faithful servant; 'rouse yourself, ma'am—be amused.' 'I will,' says the lady; 'I will learn to suffer with fortitude. Do you remember that dance, my honest friend, which in happier days you practised with this sweet angel? It never failed to calm my spirits then. Oh! let me see it once again before I die!' 'There it is,' Mr. Lenville instructs Nicholas. 'Cue for the band, *before I die*—and off they go. That's the regular thing.'

Molière borrowed freely from the Italian theatre, and gradually certain of the conventional characters of Italian comedy became, as it were, acclimatised upon the French stage. As Mascarille in 'L'Étourdi,' an imitation of L'Inavvertito, by Nicolas Barbieri, Molière for some time followed Italian custom and wore a mask. Our harlequins appear masked, and a dramatic critic, writing in 1811, notes that Grimaldi as the clown, both in the pantomimes of Mother Goose and Asmodeus, used the mask 'more frequently than we recollect to have seen it used by any preceding performer: recurring in some sort to the mode of the ancient drama.' But the characters of our English pantomime have altogether outgrown such likeness as they may at one time have presented to their southern originals or progenitors. And, transferred to France, the Italian creations gradually underwent a change. In the 'Mémoires Secrets de Bachaumont' it is recorded of a new Arlequin appearing at the 'Théâtre Italien' in 1767, that he had 'trop conservé du jeu de sa patrie: il est balourd, niais et sot, et nous exigeons beaucoup de finesse dans le jeu, de souplesse dans le geste, de légèreté dans les attitudes, de gentillesse dans toute l'action, de naïveté dans le dialogue, de talents, même accessoires, pour amuser.' The performers of Italian pantomime, while employing extraordinary arts of gesticulation, were not forbidden to speak: their extempore dialogue afforded great entertainment. On our stage actors were for some time limited to dumb-show, almost by act of Parliament. Speech unaccompanied by music—when it might be legalised as singing—was an infringement of the privileges enjoyed

by the patent theatres, and subject to heavy punishment. The unfortunate clown who was sent to prison for uttering the words 'roast beef,' without orchestral support, in a pantomime at the East London Theatre in 1787, has become a memorable figure in stage history. Isaac Disraeli refers to this period when he speaks of the singular perfection to which he had seen 'silent pantomimical language' carried by John Palmer the actor, the original Joseph Surface, who 'after building a theatre was prohibited the use of his voice by the magistrates. It was then,' writes Disraeli, 'he powerfully affected the audience by the eloquence of his action in the tragic pantomime of "Don Juan,"' founded of course upon 'Le Festin de Pierre' of Molière.

Dumb-show had long lost its old position in England as an aid or concomitant of the regular drama; it had maintained, however, a separate existence, and occasionally thrived greatly in connection with dancing and subsequently with melodrama. To Sir William Davenant has been ascribed the first introduction of entertainments of dancing and singing 'to check the superiority enjoyed by the royal comedians in their exhibition of the regular drama;' and in that first pantomime founded upon the fable of Mars and Venus, which led the way to more costly and ambitious productions of the kind, dumb-show, or what Cibber calls 'a mute narrative of gesture only,' figured prominently, with dances in character, and set forth the subject so intelligibly 'that even thinking spectators allowed it both a pleasant and a rational entertainment.' In later times dumb-show formed an alliance with melodrama. The early examples of that class of entertainment almost invariably provided employment for mute performers. Genest, in his 'History of the Stage,' referring to the 'Tale of Mystery' produced at Covent Garden in 1802, describes the work as 'the first and best of those melodramas with which the stage was afterwards inundated;' hastening to reprobate melodrama, however, as 'an unjustifiable species of the drama, a mixture of dialogue and dumb-show accompanied by music.' The names of certain early melodramas: 'The Dumb Girl of Genoa,' 'The Dumb Savoyard and his Monkey,' 'The Dumb Man of Manchester,' to enumerate no more, exemplify sufficiently the dependence placed upon pantomimic skill and the language of gesture. Pantomimes, both serious and comic, had long been popular entertainments at the small suburban theatres and public gardens, which seem to have been carried on with or without the permission of the authorities. Thus in 1735 a certain Mr. Forcer, who had become proprietor of Sadler's Wells, petitioned Parliament for a license, representing that 'the place had been used for music, rope-dancing, a short pantomime, and

the sale of liquor for forty years before;' the amusements and attractions specified were in such wise referred back to the year 1695. His application was of no avail, nor did better fortune attend the petition of a later proprietor who avowed that there had been a place of public entertainment on the site of Sadler's Wells even in Queen Elizabeth's time.

Upon the French stage a certain Mademoiselle Prévost is said to have been the first dancer who ever appeared in ballet-pantomimes. She was assisted by a male dancer, Balon, distinguished for his skill as a mimic. These artistes of the opera interpreted, by means of looks and movements, the last act of Corneille's 'Horace,' the music being supplied by Jean Joseph Mouret. The effect of their performance has been described as prodigious: 'les acteurs sur le théâtre, les illustres spectateurs dans la salle, tout le monde pleurait.' Mademoiselle Prévost, however, was soon eclipsed by that more famous dancer, Mademoiselle Marie Anne Cupis de Camargo, the reputed descendant of a noble Spanish house, who first appeared at the Opera in 1726. Dancing and dumb-show became permanently established among the entertainments of the opera house. The greatest composers thought it no condescension to write dance music; no opera could probably be called *grand* that did not provide for the introduction of the dancers and the pantomimists. In certain works, such as the 'Robert' of Meyerbeer, and the 'Masaniello' and La Bayadère 'of Auber,' special care was taken to provide a mute part of importance for the *première danseuse* of the day, who appeared as the rival of the *prima donna*, the one winning applause for her silence, the other for her song. Ballet did not exist, however, merely as an adjunct of opera, but often stood alone constituting the chief attraction of the night. No subject was too profound or too elaborate to be dealt with by the dancers; ballets were produced in many acts and occupying the whole evening in representation. Signor Carlo Blasis of Milan, for many years chief ballet-master at the opera houses of Italy, France, and England, prided himself upon the fact that he was the first to convert sacred and biblical subjects into ballet-pantomimes. He counted among his best successes his ballets of 'Susanna,' 'Giuditta,' 'Giuseppe,' and 'Il Paradiso Perduto.' He was considered a promoter of 'the imaginary or Shakespearean class of ballets,' and founded one of his productions upon the 'Faust' of Goethe. He contrived in all some eighty grand ballets, classifying them as epic, historic, mythologic, Anacreontic, biblical, oriental, poetic, pastoral, comic, &c. 'The Siege of Troy,' 'Christopher Columbus,' 'Cyrus,' 'Mokanna,' 'Tasso,' 'Don Quixote,' 'Midsummer Night's Dream,'

'Figaro,' 'The Gamester,' 'Lord Byron at Venice,' are among the titles of his most successful achievements. He was certainly an enthusiast, and wrote eloquently upon his art. He recommended the composer of ballets to concentrate upon himself 'all those rays of light which a general knowledge of the fine arts spreads over the mind;' satisfied that by such means his work will acquire a delightful hue and tone of colouring and an irresistible charm. 'Pantomime,' he wrote, 'can assume any shape and express every passion; it is a very Proteus, and may be compared to the genius of an Ariosto or a Shakespeare. In the highest and most noble style of dancing are to be found the contours and attitudes observable in the productions of Raphael, Correggio, Guido, Caracci and Albano; every motion, step, and change of feature should convey some idea, sensation, or passion.'

While dumb-show of these poetic pretensions thus flourished at the opera houses, a humbler school of pantomime found sufficient patronage in theatres forbidden by law to present the more regular drama. Before free trade in theatric exhibitions was established in Paris, a little theatre on the Boulevard du Temple was exclusively devoted to the performance of the funambulists. Here the feats of Paillasse and Pierrot were to be seen in perfection, and here, too, it is said the genius of the great Frédéric Lemaître first asserted itself. Jealous managers, indeed, decided that so fine an actor could not fairly be classed as a funambulist, and at last compelled him to transfer his services to the Porte St. Martin. For the Minister of the Interior was induced to issue an advertisement to the effect that every performer at the Funambules must before appearing there in a dramatic character prove himself or herself a true funambulist by dancing on the tight rope. Lemaître had fought broad-sword combats and otherwise secured distinction as a member of the troop directed by Madame Saqui, the famous rope-dancer; but Frédéric could not himself appear upon the rope, and his career as a funambulist closed. The glories of the little theatre in question have been celebrated by Théophile Gautier in an interesting and ingenious essay entitled 'Shakespeare aux Funambules,' the poet-critic having persuaded himself that the dumb-show and antics of Pierrot and his colleagues were inspired by a genuine Shakespearean spirit. He described at length a ballet-pantomime of the adventures of Pierrot in his attempt to obtain a new suit of clothes that he might the more decorously appear before a duchess with whom he is in love. Acting upon a sudden impulse, he murders the dealer in clothes, whose ghost haunts him afterwards in a most terrible manner throughout the remainder of the play. There is little, perhaps, in this that has

not figured in many pantomimes of British growth; but the method of representation may have been altogether exceptional. M. Gautier, urged by an enthusiastic and exuberant fancy, finds in these adventures of Pierrot with the tailor's ghost resemblances to the tragedies of 'Macbeth' and 'Hamlet,' and maintains that the curious drama of the Funambules 'mêlé de rire et de terreur . . . renferme un mythe très profond, très complet, et d'une haute moralité, qui ne demanderait que d'être formulé en sanscrit, pour faire éclore des nuées de commentaires. Pierrot,' he continues, 'qui se promène dans la rue avec sa casaque blanche, son pantalon blanc, son visage enfariné, préoccupé de vagues désirs, n'est-ce pas la symbolisation de l'âme humaine encore innocente et blanche, tourmentée d'aspirations infinies vers les régions supérieures?' Perhaps we may reply with Horatio, 'Twere to consider too curiously to consider so.'

It may be noted that Pierrot, the French clown, has not thriven in England, although our Christmas clown might be viewed as a modification of his Gallican rival—a Pierrot with coloured patches sewn upon his white dress. Still, no close resemblance exists between these two clowns. More than thirty years ago Paul Legrand, a famous Pierrot, possibly the very Pierrot who moved Gautier to so much amazement and delight, fulfilled an engagement in London at the Adelphi Theatre; but his efforts failed to satisfy the spectators. He departed too widely from the conventions of British harlequinade; his humour was not the humour our public had been accustomed to. He returned here in 1872, an old actor of 'utility' attached to a French company visiting London, and afforded glimpses now and then of his peculiar art. In a vaudeville called 'En Classe, Mademoiselles,' he assumed for a while the character of a vivandier, depicting by 'dumb motions' the incidents of a battle, from the first attack to the succour of the wounded upon the field. The performance was surprising in its vivid picturesqueness and suggestive force, and the exertions of the pantomimist were rewarded with prolonged applause.

But pantomime, however significant to some, always remains inexplicable to others: the language of gesture addresses itself vainly to unperceiving eyes. The late Examiner of Plays, Mr. Donne, before a parliamentary committee gave evidence of the difficulties he experienced in his endeavours to interpret ballet and pantomime, and expressed his opinion that to very many people the matter was as obscure as it was to him. 'A ballet is rarely understood,' he said, 'by more than about four people: the author of the ballet, and the master of the ballet, the first dancer, and the première danseuse.' To certain close observers, however, dumb-

show has seemed much more intelligible, a conventional system easily comprehended. There is humorous mention of the subject in one of the letters of Charles Dickens. Miss Kelly's Theatre, now called the Royalty in Dean Street, Soho, had been the scene of the rehearsals of Ben Jonson's 'Every Man in his Humour,' and Beaumont and Fletcher's 'Elder Brother,' the characters being sustained by the novelist and his friends. A little girl, apparently attached to the theatre, had been noticed flitting about among the amateurs so silently that she might have been deaf and dumb but for sudden small shrieks and starts forced from her by the marvels in progress about her; thereupon Dickens bestowed upon her the name of Fireworks. Presently he wrote, 'What a mass of absurdity must be shut up sometimes within the walls of that small theatre in Dean Street! Fireworks will come out shortly, depend upon it, in the dumb line, and will relate her history in profoundly unintelligible motions, that will be translated into long and complicated descriptions by a grey-bearded father and a red-wigged countryman, his son. You remember the dumb dodge of relating an escape from captivity? Clasp the left wrist with the right hand, and the right wrist with the left hand, alternately, to express chains, and then going round and round the stage very fast, and coming hand-over-hand down an imaginary cord, at the end of which there is one stroke on the drum and a kneeling to the chandelier? If Fireworks can't do that, and won't, somewhere, I'm a Dutchman.' Information has not been supplied as to the fulfilment or the non-fulfilment of this prophecy. It may be noted that Dickens had probably in mind the dumb-show indulged in by Fenella, the heroine of 'La Muette de Portici,' when she would explain to her brother Masaniello the circumstances of her escape from prison.

Grand ballets, such as Signor Blasis delighted in, have ceased to appear. The art of dumb-show declines more and more, threatens to depart altogether from our stage. Christmas pantomimes are pantomimes only in name; they are almost as dull and wordy nowadays as five-act tragedies. But a few weeks since was recorded the death of Mr. W. H. Payne, the hero for half a century of innumerable ballets and pantomimes. He has left no successor; almost it may be said that he has carried away his art with him; and playgoers of to-day's date seem scarcely conscious that they have sustained a loss. Yet dumb-show had its uses and was worth preserving. Grace and expressiveness of pose and action should count for something in considering an actor's qualities. That he had attitudinised and danced as harlequin probably contributed to the elegance and alertness, even the eloquence and passion, of Edmund Kean's *Hamlet* and *Othello*.

DUTTON COOK.

Daniel the Cricket,

AND OTHER WEST-HIGHLAND CHARACTERS.

BY CUTHBERT BEDE.

IN this paper I have put together some truthful accounts, never yet made public, and derived from authentic sources, of some West-Highland characters, whose adventures and eccentricities have been told to me by Gaelic-speaking friends in South Argyllshire. They may prove acceptable to the reader, as records of a race that has nearly passed away, and is losing its peculiarities of language, manners and customs. Of Daniel Callum, who had gained for himself the nickname of 'The Cricket,' and who, apart from his own immediate circle, has hitherto been unknown to fame, I have the following account.

By trade Daniel Callum was a wright and glazier, and, at one time, he had a very good business in the town of Campbelton; but, unfortunately, he was too fond of stealing round the corner to the dram-shop, from whence he would, after a long interval, stagger forth, filled with the fumes of alcohol, and driven by its influence to a perambulation of the streets. Even when he was sober Daniel was an oddity, and whisky seemed to draw out his oddities to their fullest extent; so that, when he emerged from the dram-shop, and came along the pavement with that peculiar alternate pause and bound that had gained him the name of 'The Cricket,' the boys always looked out for sport. Like mischievous callants, they would take every advantage of his condition, in order that they might torment him; and, as he could no more shake himself free of them than the bear in the fable could get rid of the wasps, the boys invariably succeeded in what might be called their game of Cricket.

Sometimes they pursued him with taunts and jeers: 'Eh, Cricket! ye canna carry the whusky, mon! its top-heavy ye are!' and when Daniel turned upon them in wrath, they would feign to retreat before him, in order that they might draw their adversary after them, so that they might have the fun of retaliating and charging again upon him, and thus prolong their game.

'Ye young imps o' Sawtan!' the Cricket would cry, as he jumped and jerked and bounded after them; 'only let me get the cloutch o' ye, and I'll mak' it sair for ye, top-heavy or nae top-

heavy!’ But the callants were too active and nimble even for the nimble Cricket; and they always contrived to keep close to Daniel without falling into his hands. There was no policeman, at that time, on the Campbelton streets; so the lads could do what they pleased, and Daniel had often to beat a retreat from them, under a fierce discharge of bombshells of mud, which, although they did not maim or draw blood when they burst about his head and shoulders, yet considerably changed the colour of the Cricket’s coat.

Daniel was a very good workman in the way of his trade, and he set so great a value on his workmanship that his employers often demurred to pay his demands; which was not to be wondered at, for it was a fixed part of Daniel’s system to add to the price of his work as much as it had cost him in whisky while he had been engaged upon it. This naturally led to frequent disagreements between himself and his employers; and, when they would not settle the dispute in the way that Daniel wished, he would go to law with them. If they were present when the case came on for trial, the Cricket generally lost the plea; but when they forgot, or neglected to attend the court, then Daniel would get a ‘dureet’ against them, and would make them pay to the last farthing. He was so fond of law, that he would summon people for the value of a pane of glass, or the smallest piece of work; so that scarcely a court could sit without the Cricket and his man of business being present; and, as it happened that this man of business was as thirsty a soul as his employer, the two always made a point of adjourning to the dram-shop to discuss there the merits of the case, and to drink success to the cause.

When the Cricket had the spring of whisky in his heels, he felt no delicacy in speaking to any one whom he chanced to meet; whether high or low, rich or poor, he passed his observations on all, and his tongue was in motion like a steam engine. At that time, the minister of the First Charge, in Campbelton, was Dr. Norman Macleod. He was the son of the Rev. Norman Macleod, D.D., who for nearly half a century was the minister of Morvern, Argyllshire; and he was the father of the late Rev. Norman Macleod, D.D., who was one of Her Majesty’s chaplains and the editor of ‘Good Words.’ Of these three Dr. Norman Macleods, each of whom was eminent and illustrious, the second was born in Morvern Manse, in 1784, and came to Campbelton in 1808, where he remained for sixteen years, and died in Glasgow in 1862. He was Moderator of the General Assembly, and Dean of the Chapel Royal. He was also honoured with the intimate friendship of the Queen and the Prince Consort, and had been kindly received by William IV.

when he presented to the King his metrical translation into Celtic of the Psalms of David, especially prepared for the use of the Irish. His contributions to Gaelic literature were numerous and important, and, among his many useful public labours, he by his eloquent addresses mainly helped to raise the large sum of two hundred thousand pounds that was sent to the relief of the poor Highlanders during the two potato-crop famines of 1836 and 1846.

It was to this eminent minister that Daniel the Cricket would often betake himself, when he felt himself disposed for a little talk and clishmaclaver; and as at such times he had usually imbibed too freely of his favourite whisky, his conversation was not so edifying as was that of the Doctor. But the worthy minister was always anxious to do his duty and to reclaim a drunkard; so he permitted Daniel to have his say, and never dismissed him without giving him good advice. The Cricket always told the Doctor that he would take his advice; but if he came the next time in the same springy condition the Doctor would say to him, 'Daniel, you take my advice as though you were taking a dose of physic; and, like much doctors' stuff, it does not seem to do you any good.' Then Daniel would say to him, 'Well, Doctor, I am come to you for some more of your doctors' stuff. But I am obliged to get the taste of it out of my mouth with a drop of whisky.'

One day when Dr. Macleod was in his garden, refreshing himself with work at his flower-beds, the Cricket came up, on his way from the whisky-shop, and, not content with looking over the railings, boldly opened the gate, and, with his peculiar alternate pause and bound, walked up to the minister, with a 'Hoo are ye noo? at waurk, I see!'

'It would be better for you, Daniel, if you were also at work,' replied the Doctor, who saw the Cricket's state; 'you have been taking more than is good for you.'

'D'ye mean to say I'm fou!' cried the Cricket. 'I could hold as much again, mon! maybe you'll gie me a taste of your own!'

'Maybe I'll gie you a taste of this rake, Daniel, if you don't get out of my garden!' replied the Doctor, threatening the Cricket with the rake; for, in making one of his peculiar cricket-like bounds, Daniel had jumped upon a flower-bed, and was making havoc of the Doctor's choice plants. But the Cricket refused to go out of the garden, and desired to discuss certain points of doctrine with the minister; upon which the Doctor laid about him stoutly with the rake, and forcibly ejected the Cricket from his premises.

The next Sabbath Daniel was at the Highland Church, where he heard the Doctor preach a very stirring sermon. After the

congregation had been dismissed, the Cricket saluted the minister, as he stood among his people, and said, 'You have preached an excellent discourse; but words will not do; you must take the rake to them!'

Dr. Macleod smiled and said, 'Well said, Daniel! I think that you must have heard of the old minister who had spent his best days in preaching to his people, without seeing any visible good resulting from his labours, and who, therefore, on a certain Sabbath, took with him into the pulpit a bag of stones; and, after he had preached awhile to them, said unto them, "I see that words are not sufficient; so, I will give you stones!" whereupon, he brought out his bag, and pelted at his congregation, on every side, with great dexterity, crying to them, "Will that do! will that do! will ye mind that! will ye mind that!" And so, Daniel, you have spoken wisely for once; for it is needful to take out the rake to some men.'

'Thank'ee,' said Daniel, who felt somewhat flattered; 'that is very good doctors' stuff.'

'Then, don't wash it out of your mouth,' said the Doctor; 'and bear in mind that it is especially needful to take out the rake to those men who resemble Daniel the Cricket.'

The Cricket walked away rather crestfallen; but, as usual, he did not take the minister's advice, but washed it out with a drop of whisky.

THE LAIRD AND HIS BOOTS.

The —— family contained many brave and strong men, robust and of lofty stature, and scarcely to be equalled throughout the Western Highlands. About a century-and-a-quarter ago, one of these brave men was in Edinburgh; and, while taking a walk round the Castle, he observed a crowd of men amusing themselves with putting the stone. One of the men boasted that he was not to be matched in all Scotland; whereupon, the Laird stepped forward, and, taking up the stone, hurled it with prodigious force against the rock, making a mark that has not been surpassed to this day.

Indeed, the Laird was a brave man, and could scarcely be equalled. Although he possessed an extraordinary strength of body, yet few could spring lighter, or were more nimble to win the dance; and none could beat him at sports requiring swiftness and strength. There was a certain Dr. Campbell, a very smart gentleman, and scarcely half the Laird's weight, who laid a bet with him for a game of golf, but the Laird easily gained the day, for he

was always great with the *camain*, 'shinties.' He was also an expert player on the violin, and could blow up the pipes with any piper in the West Highlands.

He was very rash, sometimes running horse-races, and getting himself thrown and hurt. It was even said of him that he was reckless enough to sail in an air-balloon, all the way from Edinburgh to Fifeshire, over the Firth of Forth. Such was his boldness, or rather madness, that everyone thought that he would soon finish his life. He was unmarried and could not settle down; at the same time he was polite and temperate, and was never seen intoxicated or keeping company with the vile. He was a gentleman in the strict sense of the word, but—fond of sport!

The Laird was such a free-handed man, that, before he came into all his estates, he had been going above his income, and became so straitened in his purse that he had no money left to buy him a pair of boots. He tried many shoemakers, if they would trust him; but they all refused. At last he came to Campbelton, and went to one Mackinven, and asked him to make him a pair of boots, telling him who he was, and that he would not be able to pay him for a long time. Mackinven said, 'I have a respect for you and your family; and I will make you as good a pair of boots as ever you put on your feet, though you never paid me at all.'

Mackinven was as good as his word, and he made the Laird a bonnie pair of boots. Three years after, the Laird got his estates; and when he came to Campbelton he called on Mackinven, and thanked him, and paid him for the boots. A month after, he came again to Campbelton, and he called on Mackinven, and insisted on paying him over again for the boots. Two months after that, he called on Mackinven a third time, and paid him a third time for the boots. And so also he did, not only a fourth time and a fifth time, but every time that he came to Campbelton he always gave Mackinven a call, and insisted on paying him for the boots.

Oh, he was a free-handed man was the Laird, and he never forgot a kindness!

THE LAIRD'S COMING OF AGE.

Among the chief proprietors in South Argyllshire are the Campbells of Saddell Castle. An old inhabitant of Dalintober, Campbelton, was an eye-witness of and partaker in the festivities attendant upon the coming of age of a Laird of Saddell; and, as the account that he gave me of the day's proceedings presents a truthful picture of a West-Highland festival—as seen from his own particular standpoint—I will quote my informant's own words.

'It is now very many years since Colonel Donald Campbell lived at Saddell. He was the proprietor of Saddell Glen, Roys, Craigs, Balegreggan, Drumore, Dalintober, Lochend, Dalaruan, and other fine properties. He married an amiable lady of the Largie family, a sister to the great Sir Alexander M'Donald Lockhart, Baronet, proprietor of Largie, Lee, Carran. Colonel Campbell was in the East India Company's service, and fought in many battles against the Great Mogul. He came home very wealthy, and lived in Saddell Mansion-house, which is built very near to the old Castle, and close to the sea-shore. The glen divides the two buildings, and there is a fine bridge over the glen, leading from the house to the Castle. Colonel Campbell and his lady were exceedingly affectionate towards each other; they might be seen constantly walking together along the shore, or in the garden and policies, and were seldom seen separate. But they did not long enjoy each other's society, for death came and laid them low in the silent dust. In the burial-ground at Saddell, on the site of the old monastery, is a tomb of exquisite workmanship, erected to their memory.* They left behind them one only child, an infant boy, who was carefully educated according to his rank and position, and became an accomplished gentleman. His personal appearance was peculiarly attractive; he was robust, and few could excel him in horsemanship and field-sports. When this young laird came to his majority, there was laid up for him eighty thousand pounds, along with the estates.

'There were brave doings on that day: for all the people on Saddell's estate were invited by him to a great feast at Saddell; and the people from Dalintober, Lochend, Dalaruan, and other places, were early afoot and off to Saddell, to congratulate the young Laird. The number became very large, for all who came to Saddell were made welcome, whether they were invited or no. Great preparations had been made on the beautiful green in front of the Mansion-house, looking over Kilbrannan Sound to the Isle of Arran. To get to this green the crowd had to cross the bridge over the river near to the old Castle; and on this bridge stood the servants of the young Laird, with jugs in their hands, and a large store of Highland whisky at their command; and they pressed a jugful of the beverage on everyone who crossed the bridge. As no other way was opened to the scene of action, all the people had to cross the bridge, and all tossed off the jug of whisky by way of paying toll. There were no teetotallers on that day, and

* For further particulars of this very interesting monastery, and some of its legends and traditions, I may refer the reader to my story, 'The Brave Girl of Obanhar,' published in 'The Belgravia Annual' for Christmas 1878.

the sight of the jugs cheered the hearts of the thirsty, so that the crossing of the bridge was the most happy exercise of the day. Some got the art of crossing and re-crossing, and crossing again, getting themselves mixed up in the crowd, but never losing sight of the jugs, until they lay down, like dead in a battle-field, vanquished by General Alcohol.

‘After the people had amused themselves for some time about the Mansion-house, and along the beautiful white sandy shore, they got orders to cross the bridge, and to view the old Castle. The bridge was again crossed, the jugs being kept in active service, and the people waxed extremely loquacious, if not eloquent; so that there were many speakers but few listeners. The strong men then set to work in putting the stone, and in leaping and tossing the caber, while the dinner was being prepared on the green. The command was then given to come to dinner, and Saddell’s piper blew up his pipes, and marched proudly forward to marshal the way. But the bridge had to be crossed again, and the jugs handled; for that was the order of the day, to let the people have a drink of spirits while they crossed the water. The scene about the bridge was truly ludicrous: those who went by the name of temperate men, lying under the strong hand of Highland whisky. But all who had any appetite got a sumptuous dinner, including ale and porter had from England for the special occasion.

‘After dinner, the young Laird made his appearance and had a real Highland welcome, the pipes screaming, and the people leaping for joy. A very sturdy Highlander was Saddell, with his stately thick legs and florid countenance: Righ Fuingal himself, or any other of his great ancestors, could not have received more honour from his clan. Some of the strong men prepared to apprehend him and carry him on their shoulders; but the young Laird was as light-footed as any of them, and as well able to walk, ride, or leap, as any one on that green; so he escaped them. Then the people were set to their sports in earnest, and a lump of a pig with a greased tail was let go among the crowd, that whoever should throw the creature over his shoulders by its tail should get the pig for himself. The active men pursued the running pig, grasping it by its slippery tail; but, the pig squealing, and the crowd laughing and running after the beast, it got away and escaped with its life. Next, a long greased pole was set up with a hat on the top of it, that whoever could climb up the pole and reach down the hat should get it for himself. A strife was made, and it was not long before the hat was reached down. Next there was a foot-race for a prize of money, in which many ran. Then there was a truly ludicrous race, never seen in those parts before, and brought

by Saddell from England: it was called a sack-race, in which the runners, or rather the hoppers and jumpers, were placed in sacks up to their necks, and tumbled and rolled and leaped, like so many great toads. This caused great diversion, and Saddell himself encouraged the winner. Then there were prizes given for leaping; and after that, as it was now the sunset, the Laird and gentlemen thought proper to dismiss the company with a *deoch-an-dhorris* and good-night. So, everyone made for his own home as well as he could.'

This young Laird of Saddell was that John Campbell, Esq., of Saddell, who was Esquire to the Knight of the White Rose (Charles Lamb, Esq.,) at the famous Eglintoun Tournament. Prince Louis Napoleon Buonaparte was at this tournament, and had several bouts at broadsword with Mr. Lamb, who was step-brother to Lord Eglintoun. They were clad in heavy armour, the former without cuisses or gyves. Mr. Campbell was unable to tilt at the tournament, having received an awkward splinter wound in the arm when standing a thrust for practice. His accident was thus referred to by Barham in his *Ingoldsby Legend*, 'The Cenotaph':—

. . . Knights of St. John,
Or Knights of St. John's Wood, who once went on
To the Castle of Goode Lorde Eglintoune.
Count Fiddle-fumkin and Lord Fiddle-faddle,
'Sir Oraven,' 'Sir Gael,' and 'Sir Campbell of Saddell,'
(Who, as poor Hook said, when he heard of the feat,
Was somehow knock'd out of his family seat.)

THE COGE-MAKER'S TRIAL.

James 'nan Gogan, the coge-maker, or, as he was commonly called, James Cogie, was a native of Campbelton, Argyllshire, and was, by trade, a cooper. He made a tolerable livelihood by making *gogain* or coges, which were small wooden dishes made up of staves, and without handles; for clay-ware was not much used in those days. The dishes that adorned the dresser and table were, usually, a few pewter plates; but these were reserved for the Sabbath and great occasions, and the coges were in ordinary use. Indeed, every child had its own coge to suit its own size, and to hold its porridge, milk, sowens, and every kind of soft food; so that there was a great demand for *gogain*, and the coge-maker's was a good trade. It was a proverb in Cantire, when one was angry with another, that he would 'take a stave out of his coge for that,' meaning thereby, that such an one would be lessened of his enjoyments.

James Cogie wrought at his trade with diligence, and would

also, occasionally, go to the North Highlands with one of the many vessels that were engaged in the herring-fishery. In this vessel he would act as cooper, and he received very good pay for making the herring-tubs. Now, James Cogie, whatever may have been his virtues, was not over-scrupulous in his observance of the eighth commandment; for, whenever he saw a block of wood that was suitable for his own purposes, he did not hesitate to endeavour to secure it.

One day, being ashore in one of the fishing lochs, he saw a fine tree growing near to a gentleman's mansion. The wood of this tree was peculiarly suited to the purposes of the coge-maker's trade, and James conceived the idea of cutting down the tree, and making it his own property. At nightfall he carried his idea into practice, and, by the friendly light of the moon, cut up the trunk of the tree into blocks, called 'junks,' and hid them amongst the bushes, so that he might be able to fetch them away one by one, and carry them home with him to Campbelton, and there convert them into coges.

But the next day the gentleman looked out from the windows of his mansion and missed his tree; and, when he had called his servants, and they had made a careful search, they found the junks of wood concealed in the bushes. Then the gentleman was greatly enraged, and he declared he would have the perpetrator of the deed discovered and punished by law. Now, the law at that time was very severe; for it enacted that any person who should be found guilty of cutting down a tree without the liberty and consent of the proprietor, should lose his right hand by having it cut off at the wrist. James Cogie had no desire to lose his right hand; for if he did, it would lose him the means of gaining a livelihood. So, in considerable alarm, he betook himself to his herring-boat, and there securely hid the one junk of timber that he had been able to carry off.

But the herring-fishers had not ended their business in the loch, and James Cogie was forced to abide with them until they sailed back home again to Campbelton. And, in the meanwhile, the gentleman, when he was unable to discover the destroyer of his tree on the dry land, caused a search to be made in the various vessels that were in the loch. Being a magistrate, he summoned the crews before him and examined them one after another; but could make nothing of them, until James Cogie's turn came.

'I sit here as a judge,' said the gentleman, 'and I put you upon your oath.'

Now, James Cogie had scruples of conscience about giving a false oath, but he was very ingenious in a certain sort of way: so he

resolved to appear very awkward, and not to understand the meaning of what was said to him. So when the Judge told him that he was upon his oath, and that he must swear, he replied, 'I never sware in my life.'

'Say you as I say, and do as I do!' said the Judge.

'Do as I do,' echoed James.

'Hold up your hand, man!' cried the Judge.

'Hold up your hand, man!' said James, quite seriously.

'Tut, tut, man! say what I say!' cried the Judge.

'Tut, tut, man! say what I say!' echoed James.

'Put out that stupid man!' cried the Judge, pointing at James.

'Put out that stupid man!' echoed James, pointing at the Judge. And in this way James Cogie was dismissed, for which he was very thankful; and when the herring-fishers asked him how he had fared with the Judge, James would answer, 'I sware at the Judge, and the Judge sware at me.'

James Cogie had one child, a daughter, and a very pretty girl too; so she had many suitors, and her father proposed that he would give her to the one who was best at putting a hoop on a coge. So they met at his house one day, and he set them to work at coge-making, but one after another broke the hoop in driving it over the staves. One of the suitors was a greater favourite with the girl than all the others put together, and before he made his trial, she whispered to him, in her native Gaelic:—

Nuair a sguireadh an ceareal re dol,
Sguireadh m'athair fein gá chur;

which signifies:

When the hoop did cease to go,
My father ceased to drive, I know.

The young man took the whispered hint, and put on the hoop so carefully, that he succeeded in the attempt in which all the others had failed. So James Cogie gave him his daughter in marriage; and her words continue to this very day to be repeated as a proverb by the coopers in Cantire.

Our March Out.

TRA, lallah lal lah! lallah lal lah! lallah lal lah! Tra, lallah lal lah!" with a tremendous emphasis on the final 'lah.' It could be nothing else than the 'assembly' blared out in my very ears by the stentorian lungs of Johnny Tottles, our bugler; and I sprang up in bed at the sound. No Johnny Tottles was there, however, but there was a continuous *crescendo* movement of knuckles going on at the bedroom door: while the wife of my bosom, who had slept peacefully through the staccato, wakened up by my startled jump, began shaking me violently under the pleasing delusion that *she* was waking *me*—such are the ways of womankind.

A vague sense of something important to happen that day was struggling through the labyrinth of my sleep-dazed brain, and finally emerged in a full realisation of the fact that this was Good Friday; and that my corps, or as much of it as could be got together, was to start that very morning on its annual 'march out.'

When I craftily describe my corps as the Hundred and Oneth Fiddlesex, having its head-quarters in the very centre of Bohemia Proper, and mention that I have the honour to be junior lieutenant thereof, I feel that I am concealing its and my identity under a flimsy disguise which will be immediately penetrated by the subtle forefinger of the knowing reader—but no matter.

The first impulse of a man who has anything of importance on hand for the day is to make a dash at the window-blind; and even a junior lieutenant of a crack volunteer corps is not exempt from human weaknesses. In point of fact, I did make a dash at the window-blind; and I groaned in spirit as I beheld the aspect of nature thereby disclosed. Good Friday in this instance sadly belied its name. It was, in truth, a shocking Bad Friday: utterly unworthy of even an English April, and that is saying a great deal. The winter had been unusually prolonged; and on this *soi-disant* spring morning the icy sleet was being driven against the window panes by a bitter blast from the N.E. by E., easterly, or thereabouts, with at least a six-fire-engine power.

I turned my gaze ruefully from the wintry scene without to the three chairs whereon were displayed, in all the pride and pomp of war, my new patrol jacket; my superfine continuations (the fall of which over the boot had been specially pointed out to me in a

glow of professional pride by Mr. Buckles, the eminent military tailor, only the day before); and my new forage-cap, which, alas! was to be substituted for the supreme glories of the 'Pickelhaube' that gave me—so my wife fondly assured me—quite the air of a Life-Guardsman. In my own mind I had misgivings that the resemblance was even stronger to Policeman X 1004 on our beat, who usually surveyed me with an air of critical scorn not unmingled with defiance whenever I chanced to pass him crowned with this latest achievement of military science. But the admiration of a wife for her liege lord is a sacred and mysterious thing, by no means to be limited by the grosser realities of life. Last, but not least, my eye fell upon the gleaming scabbard and hilt of my service sword, spotless and guiltless of rust or tarnish; and I could not help heaving a sigh as I thought of all this splendour limp and draggled and tawdry, after that miserable untimely sleet should have done its worst. There still remained one consolation, however. The yet more gorgeous panoply of full-dress had been carefully packed in my tin uniform case and sent on for transport by baggage waggon; and it, at least, was saved from present harm. Indeed, I reflected with a certain satisfaction that my emergence at church parade from the sombre chrysalis of more or less weather-stained undress into the butterfly-like effulgence of spotless scarlet tunic and silver-mounted helmet, would render the transformation all the more effective by contrast—provided always that this grim and gruesome Easter weather should by that time have repented of its ways and taken to smiling instead of weeping.

I believe it is only the D—— of C—— who can postpone a parade on account of the weather—a proud privilege which I heartily envied him at that moment; but I was not H.R.H. Wherefore, calling to mind that 'England expects every man to do his duty,' I shut out the ghastly scene without, and plunged boldly into my tub. An hour later, fortified by an excellent breakfast, I bade farewell to my wife and family on the doorstep, and sallied forth into the warring elements, prepared to do battle in my country's cause against any odds that might turn up within a thirty-mile radius of the metropolis.

There was something soothing in the evident respect which my martial appearance created in the minds of the populace as I rattled my scabbard along the pavement on my way to headquarters. Even Policeman X 1004 stood at attention and saluted at the corner of the road. I noticed several maid-servants pause in their door-step scrubbing, and look after me open-mouthed and speechless with an ecstasy of admiration. It is true that there was

a certain flavour of derision in the remarks of the small boys whom I passed; but then the mind of the average small boy is incapable of feeling respect for anything in heaven or earth; and therefore, when I overheard such observations as 'Oh my! Billy, ain't he a guy?' or beheld a youthful imp imitating my military stride amidst the plaudits of his companions, I only curled my moustache with a noble scorn and passed on unheeding.

Arrived at head-quarters, it was apparent that in my ardour for the fray I had arrived much too early; for the square, although well filled by that marvellous London crowd which gathers together in so mysterious a way upon any occasion, from a shocking murder to a fallen cab-horse, was destitute of red-coats; and though I could not but feel flattered by the sensation my appearance created among the damp and expectant multitude, I would rather not have been the sole recipient of their remarks and criticisms. There was nothing for it, however, but to 'dree my weird' as best I might; and summoning up as awe-inspiring an expression as I could manage, I squared my shoulders and marched boldly on the crowd. I rather flatter myself that some of the less well-informed took me for H.R.H. the Commander-in-Chief himself, come down in person to review the gallant Hundred and Oneth, for, as I strode through the serried ranks, a faint cheer rose in the air; and one rather grimy gentleman, rather maudlin I fear, even at that early hour, showed such an evident intention to embrace me fervidly, that I beat a hasty retreat into the office of the adjutant at head-quarters. I found the gallant captain who filled the post of acting-adjutant sitting moodily upon the edge of the table, from which coign of vantage he had a cheerful view of the dripping square without, and puffing at a very large cigar, with a vindictive expression which seemed to betoken something gone wrong.

'Hullo, Mars,' he cried (I am generally called Mars in the corps from my enthusiastic pursuit of the art of war)—'Hullo, Mars, you're about the first to arrive, I think. Have you seen such a thing as a horse about anywhere?' No, I had not seen such a thing, excepting, I added conscientiously, between the shafts of a cab.

'It's no joke, I can tell you,' continued the adjutant. 'I have had the deuce and all of a bother about that charger.' I assured him of my sympathy beforehand, and begged to hear the recital of his woes.

'Well, you see, Captain Jinks' (our commanding officer) 'and I both wanted a charger, and I knew that there was just the very thing I wanted at Snaffles' stables. So I went down without—'

saying anything to Jinks, who lives close to me, you know, and got old Snaffles to give me the refusal of the horse. Well, Jinks (gay dog, Jinks, you know) had his eye on the same horse, and what does he do but go down on the sly and get Mrs. Snaffles to promise *him* this very beast; and so we went on, each thinking he had outwitted the other, until this morning, when I sent my man down to see if the charger was all right, and Mrs. Snaffles told him that Jinks had bespoke him. And it seems Jinks had sent his man down to make the same inquiry, and old Snaffles told him the horse was bespoke by me. Now, what the deuce could we do, you know? *We couldn't both ride the same horse, eh?*

I admitted that the appearance of two field officers astride upon the same animal was unusual, and might create confusion.

'But how did you manage after all?' I inquired.

'Manage!' said the adjutant. 'Why, of course Mrs. Snaffles had her way, and I was left in the lurch; so I've sent my man over to Curbes to get me another horse, and he ought to have been here with it before now.'

At this juncture a loud cheer was heard outside, and we both hastened to the window. A man was at the door in the act of dismounting from an animal bearing some general resemblance to a horse. It was in the nature of a rough outline, before the finishing touches had been put in; and as we noted the fine Roman nose, the deep hollow of the back (quite a 'Roman fall'), and the way in which the animal 'stood over' on two out of its three serviceable legs, we both unconsciously extemporised a short form of prayer for the preservation of the unhappy individual who was doomed to mount the unsafe edifice. In half a minute it was only too clear that this was the charger intended for the adjutant himself; and I offered my sincere condolences to that afflicted officer upon the miserable fate which seemed to be in store for him.

By this time the men were beginning to stream in rapidly; and the sober precincts of the old Bohemian Square were alive with the clank of weapons, and made glorious by broad dashes of brilliant scarlet, where groups had gathered themselves together. Every man was in heavy marching order, with havresack, water-bottle, and great-coat; the latter strapped on the back knapsack-wise. The officers carried theirs rolled over the right shoulder in the fashion rendered familiar by the Prussians in the Franco-German war.

As the time approached which had been fixed for our start there was a great deal of that preliminary commotion which always accompanies a military spectacle, and which is so perplexing to outsiders. The 'assembly' was sounded, and as the men came hurrying

in from their temporary refuges they were formed up into companies; and the roll having been called, the usual inspection took place. The officers went through the interesting process of squinting down barrels (a proceeding strongly suggestive of a magpie looking into a marrow-bone), by no means adding to the immaculate appearance of their white gloves in the operation. Knapsack-straps were pulled, and disparaging remarks made upon the sit of belts and havresacks; and then, much refreshed, officers and men relapsed into a condition of 'standing at ease,' waiting the arrival of the commanding officer.

In the mean time the band 'discoursed most excellent music,' to the great enjoyment of the outer crowd, for whom a military band has attractions far exceeding anything that could be produced at Covent Garden or Her Majesty's.

The next event of importance was the appearance of our baggage waggon; which was a real one, *bien entendu*, and no make-up of a furniture van and carrier's tilt. It had, in fact, been borrowed for the occasion from our good friends the Guards, and its object and uses were freely canvassed by the ever-growing crowd; some of whom opined that it was to carry off the sick and wounded; while others were under the impression that the whole corps would betake themselves to rest under the tilt.

Presently the commanding officer put in an appearance, and 'attention' was called all along the line. As the gallant captain rode into the square, the adjutant and I both took stock of the noble steed he bestrode; and it was with a grim satisfaction that we discovered, from certain unmistakable sounds, that the animal was a roarer, and after all had not many more legs to stand upon than the adjutant's own Bucephalus. I have reason to believe that both the rival claimants had been completely 'done'; for each claims a preternatural knowingness in horse-flesh, and each solemnly swore that this horse was not the 'very thing' for which he had manoeuvred.

The parade-ground was by this time filled with an appreciative and admiring crowd of such portentous density that it became a serious question how we were to get through without perpetrating an indiscriminate slaughter of the innocents, for almost every woman had at least one baby attached to her person in some way or other; but a happy inspiration came opportunely to the commanding officer, who ordered the band to retire to some distance and play furiously a popular tune. This piece of strategy had the desired effect, and the crowd left us in peace while we were put through what appeared to most of us a quite unnecessary amount

of marching and countermarching : a sort of preliminary canter, the only object of which seemed to be to get us into wind.

At last everything was ready. The band struck up 'The girl I left behind me,' and amidst the cheers of our admiring countrymen, we 'formed fours' and deployed majestically out of the square. Just as we were starting I noticed old Snaffles grinning covertly behind the crowd ; but his grin collapsed suddenly as the Commanding Officer caught sight of him, and called out, 'Confound it, Snaffles, my horse has gone lame already!'—which indeed appeared to be the fact. But the wily one was equal to the emergency. 'It's all right, Cap'en,' he observed confidentially ; 'that's only a 'abit he's got at starting. He'll go like a two-year-old, once he warms to it!'—a statement the veracity of which it was too late to question.

Looking round at this moment, I was concerned to see that the unlucky adjutant was again in difficulties. He was engaged in performing a sort of impromptu war dance on one leg at the side of his charger in an apparently vain attempt to get his other foot up to the stirrup. The venerable relic of equine nature itself did not seem to present any special difficulty ; for he stood so much over on his fore legs that one could almost have walked up his ribs on to his back, ladder-wise, and it was only afterwards that I fully understood the situation. It seems the tailor, in constructing a certain indispensable portion of the adjutant's attire, had not made allowance for riding ; and after many fruitless essays to get his foot up, my gallant friend was fain to accept a 'leg-up' obligingly offered by a sympathising coster.

Our march through London was quite a triumphal procession, and the hearty enthusiasm of the following crowd would have been very gratifying had it not been somewhat embarrassing. The day being Good Friday was of course a general holiday, and as we tramped along, the crowd grew and grew, until it became rather a difficult matter to keep our formation under the pressure. The baggage waggon was, next to the band, the great object of attention ; and so pressing grew the curiosity of our followers that it became necessary to detach a rear guard with fixed bayonets to look after it. This manœuvre, although effective in a way, only increased the admiration with which our black-tilted waggon was regarded ; and again various theories were started as to its uses and destination ; one of the most original being that it contained the wives and families of the married men !

It is needless to say that we occasionally got into difficulties on our way through the crowded streets. A tram-car is an awkward

in from their temporary rest-
panies; and the roll having been
place. The officers went on
squinting down barrels (as if
magpie looking into a mirror)
immaculate appearance of
Knapsack-straps were pushed
the sit of belts and having
and men relapsed into a
arrival of the commander.

In the mean time
to the great enjoyment
band has attractions
duced at Covent Garden.

The next evening
baggage waggon
make-up of a furniture
borrowed for the
its object and
crowd; some of
wounded; while
corps would be

Presently

‘attention’ was
rode into
noble street
we discovered
was a road
than the
both to
claims
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de
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the way like an ordinary
upon to charge any of
crossed our flanks in a
Friday, the great van
we were charged by a city
showed a cultivated talent for

through all difficulties, and after
Proper, our miscellaneous
our great joy and relief
numbered half a hundred or so
crowd.

at first halt, and refreshed the
at a certain suburban hostelry;
thank goodness! by our

country; and to men jaded by a
the air, and the fresh green of
were inexpressibly refreshing;
over the face of nature, and an
violently against our faces as we

have been so often sung that I do
poetic description of the scenery.
rather hackneyed, and whatever
I am inclined to believe that
best stand-point from which to
especially when the said mare is
progress about the knees, after a hard
she is apt at such times to look
and devote one's mind to speculations as
halting-place, rather than to dwell
on soft blue distances and rich green and
although the joys of the country have
poet, its drawbacks have never yet,
chronicler. For example, it is very
along a green-carpeted lane with high
and with the scent of just awakened
filling the air. But much of the poet
when a mad bull, or even a herd of wild
appearance suddenly round a corner. A
example sadly over mind. The intellec-
by the physical instinct of self-preserva-
nately (if no one is looking) yield to his

first impulse, and make a strategic movement, as rapidly as circumstances will permit, through the nearest hedge.

Fortunately for our reputation, no such severe test was applied to our courage. It is true that we were before long charged by a flying squadron of bicyclists, who came down upon our ranks with a vigour and determination worthy of Cetewayo and his Zulu 'impis.' But a bicyclist, however determined, undergoes at least as much risk in a collision as his objective; and although our friends seemed at first disposed to hold the road against us, the resolute front which was presented by our advance guard appalled them at the last moment, and they turned ignominiously on to the side turf.

A little farther on, a welcome halt was called in the midst of the highway, for the purpose of distributing the billets for the night. This duty is performed by the quartermaster, who hands the billets to the sergeants, to be by them filled up and notified to the men.

Our next stoppage was a particularly pleasant one, for it was made before the country house of one of our captains, who regaled the whole detachment on the lawn with 'high tea,' to which I need not say full justice was done by everyone; and we resumed our march with a sensation of general repletion which only tea is capable of bestowing on the recipient.

At about 5.30 P.M. we arrived at our head-quarters for the night, which were established at the principal inn of the village; and any stranger entering the place might easily have imagined that martial law had been established in that parish, when he beheld the formidable precautions taken to guard our camp from any possible surprise. The baggage waggon was drawn up in the inn yard, and a sentry placed over it. The guard was changed and a new one mounted over head-quarters; and although no entrenchments were thrown up, I rather flatter myself we should have given a good account of any enemy who had ventured to disturb our repose that night.

After all the preliminaries had been arranged, and the men assigned to their various billets, we proceeded to dine in a fashion perhaps somewhat more luxurious than is customary in real warfare, and the first evening was spent in an harmonious and convivial manner befitting the close of an arduous day's work.

Later in the evening the officer of the day going his rounds lighted on a spectacle which filled him with wrath and indignation; for he discovered the sentry who had been mounted on the baggage waggon, *in flagrante delicto*, in the very act of lighting his pipe to solace the weary hours of his post. Of course such a breach of

military discipline could not be overlooked; and court-martials and Heaven knows what other awful things were held out before the wretched sentry, who, however, finally escaped with a severe reprimand. We could not shoot him, nor put him in irons, as was at first suggested in the heat of the moment by the bellicose quartermaster; and to have relieved him from his sentry duty would have suited our friend's book extremely well.

Later still, the acting sergeant-major was ordered by the commanding officer to tell the senior bugler to blow the 'Last Post.'

'If you please, sir,' said the sergeant, 'he's taken his boots off!'

'Then tell him to blow it out of window, and be blowed to him!'—the last words *sotto voce*, of course.

We were sitting over a quiet game of 'Nap' shortly afterwards, when a servant came to announce that *the* local policeman solicited an audience; and presently a ruddy and bushy-whiskered individual sidled in, and drawing himself up in the doorway, saluted with military precision.

'Well, policeman,' quoth the commanding officer, 'what can we do for *you*?'

'Av ye plaze, sorr!' said the official in a brogue that you might have broken your arm against, 'hopin' I don't intrude, sorr, I'm the parish constable!'

'Very good,' replied the commanding officer benignly, 'and an excellent officer, I have no doubt: but what can we do for you?'

'Well, you see, sorr, I was thinking you'd wish that the civil authority would act with the milingtery, an' I came to ask if y'd any orrrders, sorr!'

The civil power, in the person of this stalwart Milesian, was assured that we had no intention of interfering with his constituted authority, and after accepting a little refreshment, departed with many expressions of good-will.

After the fatigues of the day, we were most of us glad enough to turn in early, and accordingly we sought our couches, to rest, but not, alas! to sleep. For some of the younger men of our party showed that even the toils of the day had not abated much of their boisterous animal spirits; letting off their surplus supply in an improvised game of leap-frog along the corridors of the inn, attired in a light and airy costume which might have been considered 'full dress' by the before-mentioned Zulu monarch, but which was somewhat deficient in essentials according to the sumptuary code of civilisation.

I had not been in bed half-an-hour, when I became aware of a steady 'drip, drip,' somewhere in the room; and, relighting my

candle, I discovered that the soaking wet of the day had been too much for the roof of the inn; for the ceiling of my room was rapidly developing into an extemporised shower-bath, necessitating a prolonged struggle with a ponderous wooden bedstead, which had perforce to be removed out of the range of the descending waterspout.

Even then the disturbances of the night were not over; for just as I was sinking into that calm sleep which is the reward of the righteous only, I was roused by the sound of somebody hammering at the door of the captain of the day in the next room, and the glimmer of a lantern under my door.

‘Who’s there?’ inquired a sleepy voice.

‘It’s only me!’ replied the quartermaster. ‘Here’s Private Jones says he can’t find his billet!’

‘Oh—aw—!’ here came a fearful yawn—‘all right! don’t bother—do the best you can—tell him to repor—aw—report circumstance in the morning!’ and the voice subsided into a drowsy hum.

I sincerely hope Private Jones enjoyed a good night’s rest somewhere; but I was much too sleepy to trouble my head about him just then.

The next morning, after breakfast, I found the officer of the day sitting at a table with a large sheet of official foolscap before him and ‘his eye in a fine frenzy rolling.’ It was in fact his duty to draw up a report, and the puzzlement was to know what on earth he was to put in it. Looking over his shoulder, I read the following words written in a fine bold hand: ‘Sir, I have the honour to report’—and nothing more.

I complimented him upon the vigour of his opening sentence at least, and suggested that he should continue it, something in the form of a young lady’s diary:—‘Got up. Heavenly morning Had breakfast, &c.’—but I am bound to say he did not seem at all to appreciate the humour of my suggestions. Indeed, his language was perhaps more violent than the occasion demanded.

Presently, the bugle sounded to ‘fall in,’ and there was the usual hurry-scurry on such occasions. There was the customary rush of the man who is always late, and who comes in panting desperately and jerking out breathless fragments of apology; and the man who at the last moment finds he has forgotten his pocket-handkerchief or something, and ‘falls out’ to get it. Just as we were on the point of starting, the quartermaster, who is of an amorous temperament, and had had certain tender love passages with the pretty barmaid of the inn, disappeared, as he said, ‘to settle the bill.’ The operation, which was distinctly visible

through the open door, seemed to involve a great deal of close calculation. In fact, the barmaid and he had literally to 'put their heads together' a great many times before a settlement was arrived at.

The events of this day resembled those of the previous one so much, that I do not intend to inflict its chronicle upon the good-natured reader. We marched, threw out advance and rear-guards, and went through a variety of evolutions, which were interesting to us as actors, but which, I fear, would prove 'caviare to the general;' and after a capital day's work we arrived on Saturday evening at the head-quarters which had been arranged for us over the Sunday.

The same precautions were taken as on the previous evening; and our great waggon created a profound impression as it was drawn up in the yard, and a sentry placed to guard it from the attentions of the natives.

'I thought them was volunteers, Bill, but they's raal sodgers, them is! Look at their waggon,' remarked a bucolic individual as we filed in; and there is no doubt that our 'Guards' van' threw a great deal of *prestige* over us in the eyes of the vulgar, who have not yet realised the fact that a volunteer now forms a real and integral part of his country's system of defences.

That evening, being the last available for conviviality, was spent in a very agreeable manner by everyone. We resolved ourselves into a sort of cave of harmony, the commanding officer making a most efficient chairman; and many a man developed a musical talent that night which had hitherto lain *perdu* and unsuspected even by himself. Infinitely various were the styles and types of the performers. There was the man whose ideal of exquisite humour is centred in the Great Gubbins or the Jolly Jones of Music-Hall celebrity, and who prides himself upon an exact imitation of their manners and gestures. The man who 'isn't used to singing comic songs,' but is prevailed upon to sing one; and does it in a lugubrious fashion suggestive of internal agonies during the operation. The man who sings sentimental ditties in a weak tenor with his head thrown back and his eyes seeking sympathy from the ceiling. The man who breaks down at the second verse, forgets his words, and, in hopeless confusion, is recommended to 'try back.' The man who offers to sing a love song composed by himself, over which he gets maudlin, and sheds copious tears; to the great embarrassment of his neighbours, who pass him handkerchiefs ostentatiously over the table. The man who essays 'Ben Bolt' in a shrill falsetto, shutting his eyes firmly and making horrid grimaces over the high notes. The man (a veritable Jingo this

who obliges with a patriotic song, and frowns severely as he sternly denounces his country's foes. Lastly, the most terrible type of all, the man who has no more voice nor music in him than a cock-rook, and yet *will* sing, in a stupendous roar like unto a great bull of Bashan. All these types, and more, were represented in the large room of our inn: and I feel sure that if any indomitable foe had cut through our guard and escalated the inn wall, he would have stood dismayed before the terrific sounds which issued from that inn window; and would finally have been driven back with immense slaughter, routed and utterly demoralised, when the destructive volley firing of our last type was opened upon him.

When bedtime came, it became apparent that there was a little hitch somewhere in the arrangements. Accommodation had been requisitioned for a certain number, and more men had turned up than had been counted upon.

The landlord came with a long face to notify to the commanding officer that the demand for beds was greater than the supply. 'Don't you think, captain, some on 'em might sleep three in a bed?' he suggested; but the proposition was received with such a shout of dismay that Boniface stood abashed. I don't quite know how the difficulty was got over; but we all settled down somehow for the night. Some of the beds were, I fear, 'short' in more senses than one. One tall private, a veritable son of Anak, solemnly assured me that he had to turn his bedfellows out every half-hour so that he might get a few minutes' rest, across from corner to corner. I am bound to believe that man; but there is nevertheless a strain about his story.

The almanack assured us that the next day was Easter Sunday. Without some such assurance the day might very well have passed for a typical Christmas, minus the holly and mistletoe, and the other conventional indications of jollity which are considered essential on that festive occasion. Two days of hard marching under wintry influences had, however, pretty well inured us to anything in the way of weather which even our fine old national climate could produce for our benefit. Easter is popularly supposed to be a season of peculiar joyousness; for, apart from religious associations, it is the beginning of spring, when all nature is expected to cast off its winter gloom, and burst out into fresh verdure. On this particular Easter Sunday not a leaf nor even a bud had dared to burst its bonds and emerge into the bitter air. The gaunt trees waved their naked arms in passionate protest against the wintry blasts, and the hedges showed grim and black against the misty background of fields, and the grey sodden roads, all *puddly* with yesterday's rain. Notwithstanding these draw-

backs, we endeavoured manfully, like Mark Tapley, to be jolly under adverse circumstances; and the rigour of the atmosphere without only heightened our appreciation of the very excellent breakfast prepared for us by our host of the Blue Boar.

It is true, church parade, with a thermometer marking something perilously near freezing-point, did not present itself to our minds as at all an attractive thing; but, as the commanding officer judiciously observed, the morals of the men *must* be attended to; and an example of strict propriety had to be set to the rural inhabitants.

So we marched to church, accompanied, I verily believe, by the entire able-bodied population of the town; and I hope and trust that the example of decorum presented by our corps was not without its effect upon the rising youth of that parish. Nevertheless, I fear that our presence on that occasion may not have been altogether welcome to those rural beaux. The bells of the church rang sweetly as we marched to the building, and the other belles of the church smiled no less sweetly upon us inside. Indeed, the pastoral Corydons were completely cut out by our scarlet tunics, and many a wrathful glance was cast by a scowling yokel as some pretty girl proudly shared her hymn-book with a stalwart 'soldier-lad.'

'Sally wulln't look at oi loikely when these here volunteer sodgers be about,' I overheard one morose youth remark to another, vindictively. It is to be hoped that the seeds of jealousy thus sown bore no after-fruit to the detriment of the maidens or their resentful swains.

At the end of the service we marched back again to our quarters; and now occurred a thing which I would gladly refrain from mentioning, but that strict conscientiousness obliges me to refer to it.

We marched gaily along until we came in sight of our inn; when we were astonished to find a sentry belonging to another corps mounted outside the gate. This was bad enough; but when at our approach the sentry cried, 'Guard turn out!' and a strange guard did turn out to oppose our entrance into our own head-quarters, it was a little too much for our patience.

'Look here, my good man! These are our quarters,' said the captain commandant mildly to the sergeant in charge. 'Just be good enough to move out of our way! Mark time!' he shouted, as our men, who had not been halted by their officers, pushed on from the rear all unconscious of anything amiss.

And then amidst the tramp, tramp of our corps an animated colloquy took place between the captain on the one side and the

audacious sergeant of the guard on the other. The latter was firm in his resolve to allow no one to pass without the *mot du jour*, and it is impossible to say what turn events might have taken, even to the storming of the position by our hungry and infuriated men, had not an officer of the rival corps come out to explain.

It seems that, secure in our safety from attack, the commanding officer had marched all his men to church, omitting the precaution of leaving a guard at head-quarters. The other corps, taking the same town in their march, had halted all unknowingly at *our* inn, and finding how matters stood, had taken this means of teaching us a lesson. They had, in fact, taken temporary possession of our head-quarters; and all our camp property, baggage, and ammunition were theirs by right of conquest!

It was with difficulty that the men restrained themselves from bursting into a roar of laughter as the comic side of the incident began to dawn upon them; and though we fumed a good deal at the trick which had been played upon us, we could not but admit that we had been fairly caught. So after the men had been dismissed a general fraternisation took place between the rival forces, and amity and goodwill were restored.

The following day we started upon our return march, and I will not weary the reader with a repetition of its details. Suffice it to say that we marched into London again with no diminution of enthusiasm on the part of the admiring cockneys, whose reception of us could scarcely have been warmer had we returned a conquering army, fresh from the slaughter of innumerable enemies, and bearing upon each manly breast the proud distinction of the Victoria Cross.

So ended our 'march out;' and I returned to the domestic joys of my family with my body invigorated by healthful exercise, and my mind expanded and refreshed by contact with the direct influences of nature: such influences as even nature can only bestow when she is untainted by the reek and steam of a great city.

Donna Quixote.

BY JUSTIN MCCARTHY.

CHAPTER XXIII.

GABRIELLE'S GREAT HOPE FULFILLED.

CLARKSON FIELDING presented himself at his brother's a day or two after as if nothing had occurred.

'Why, Clarkson, I thought you had gone off to California or Patagonia again,' Sir Wilberforce said. 'Where were you all this time? We were quite alarmed about you.'

Fielding wondered who were the 'we'; but did not ask any question. He had been schooling himself down a good deal during his absence. He explained that he had been back to his old lodgings for a while.

'I have a lot of things to put in order there, you know,' he said; 'papers and all that. I think of going off somewhere again: one must do something.'

'Don't see why you could not make up your mind to stay here,' Sir Wilberforce said. 'There's plenty for you to do, you know, Clarkson. I have a good deal of your money—it's yours and not mine; poor father would always have it kept for you, and so there's no compliment in the matter; and there are lots of things to do in England. You must have knocked about the world quite enough, I am inclined to think. Settle down, my boy, settle down. Politics, now—quite fascinating, I believe, for people who have an interest in that sort of thing. I dare say that many people think I ought to be in the House of Commons. Poor father would certainly have liked one of us to be in the House, I know. But I haven't any taste that way; practical science is more my line. Why can't you go in for politics? You could get a seat as easily as anything.'

'I don't think I should be much of a success, Wilberforce; I'm afraid I don't quite understand all about the county franchise and the judicature bill.'

'But foreign affairs, you know—the Eastern Question, American politics and that sort of thing. You might talk very well on such subjects as that—when occasion required, of course; when occasion required. I believe lots of the men in the House know nothing

of foreign politics, or of anything, by Jove, for that matter. And then you need not speak unless you liked. It's not by any means necessary for a man to speak. Some of the best men in the House never open their mouths, I'm told.'

'Perhaps my political opinions wouldn't agree with yours, Wilberforce. I am an awful Radical, you know—a sort of Red Republican.'

'God bless my soul! you don't say so? I had no idea at all. But that won't last, I dare say. All young men are that way, I fancy. It passes off; it's like falling in love, and infidelity, and so on. Still, it would be better to wait perhaps. Well, then, let me see, there's the army. You wouldn't think of the army?'

'A little past the time for beginning, I am afraid,' Fielding said with all possible gravity.

'Yes, yes; I dare say it is. But the volunteers, now—why not the volunteers? A commission might be got, I dare say; do they have a commission in the volunteers? Anyhow, you might become a captain of volunteers and take a lot of interest in the drill and the marching and all that; it gives one something to think about.'

Fielding shook his head.

'I don't think I should care for mere playing at soldiers,' he said.

'Well, well, there are no end of other things. Why, let me see—the bar, for instance. Why not the bar, Clarkson? You might go in for being Lord Chancellor one of these days.'

'Why not the Church?' Clarkson asked.

Sir Wilberforce looked up in sudden doubt as to whether Clarkson was really serious this time.

'Well, yes; the Church of course, if a man had any turn that way; what could be better? If he had a turn that way, really, Clarkson; but I don't know, somehow.'

'You don't think I have a turn that way, Wilberforce, and you are quite right. It was only a very stupid joke of mine. I am afraid I have really no turn for anything that is steady or good or respectable, and I doubt whether I am young enough to mend. I think I am at my best when knocking about the world. At least I don't get in anybody's way then——'

'Come, now, Clarkson, you mustn't talk in that way—no, no, you must not indeed. That sounds as if you thought we did not want you here, and that isn't so, you know; it really isn't.'

Again Clarkson mentally wondered who were 'we.'

'I didn't mean that indeed, Wilberforce.'

'No, no,' Wilberforce went on; 'we couldn't stand that, you

know; I couldn't afford to lose you again just after finding you. I haven't been so happy for years as since you turned up. I don't mean to say that I kept thinking of you all the time you were away as much as I ought to have done; people don't, you know. You had become a sort of myth to me, my boy; like the wandering Jew, or the Man in the Moon, or something. But I am really delighted that you have turned up, and I feel monstrously obliged to Mrs. Vanthorpe for having brought us together—Gad, what a trump of a woman she is! I have something to talk to you about presently concerning her, but just now I want to have this out with you about your leaving England, which I think is very unnecessary and unwise; and I don't like it at all. I want you here. There are only the two of us, and there's nothing now to keep us asunder.'

There was something very moving in the earnest simplicity of Wilberforce. Clarkson felt greatly touched by it.

'We ought to have known each other much sooner, Wilberforce. I shouldn't have spent so much of my life knocking aimlessly about the world if I had known what sort of a fellow you were.' Then he told Wilberforce of the time when he actually came to that house with the intention of seeing and speaking to his brother, and how, happening to see Wilberforce on his horse preparing for a ride, he changed his mind and did not make himself known.

'God bless my soul, Clarkson, what an extraordinary thing to do! I never heard of such a thing. Why, I should have been delighted to see you; I always thought poor father was too hard, you know. Gad, he was often hard enough on me, I can tell you; I hadn't it all my own way, by any means.'

'Well, you see one result of it all,' said the younger brother, 'is that I can't settle to anything, Wilberforce. I don't think I could bring myself to sit down to any steady pursuit; I am not young enough to begin all over again.'

'Better try, better try before you give up,' Wilberforce said cheerily. 'Turn to something for a while, anyhow. Art, now; I suppose you haven't any taste that way?'

Fielding shook his head.

'Literature? Lots of fellows write books nowadays that don't seem to me a bit better than you might do, or any one if he only tried. Then there's business; the City. You might do something in banking, or the China trade; capital things; keep a fellow at work and give him something to think of. I wish you would turn your attention to practical science with me; I could find you occupation enough, and we could work together; and you have no idea what a hold it takes on you once you go into it.'

'I think I should like to try a little exploring,' the younger man said with some hesitation.

'Africa and that sort of thing? I don't think I would do that, Clarkson. It's used up, isn't it? Every fellow does exploring in Africa now, and reads a paper at the Geographical Society, and writes a book with queer pictures of black men and women. I don't think I would turn to that if I were you. No, my boy, stay at home for the present at all events; I can't let you go away again just yet.'

Fielding made no answer. It was hard not to yield to his brother's kindly pressure, and yet he felt that the one thing he now could not do was to remain in London. It was easy, however, to turn aside the stream of any conversation in which Sir Wilberforce was engaged, and Fielding did so now by reminding him that he had something to tell about Mrs. Vanthorpe. Fielding fully expected to hear that Sir Wilberforce had proposed for her and been accepted. But it was only about Paulina. Sir Wilberforce told of his own intervention, and how it had ended, and how Paulina had disappeared. All this was very interesting news to the young man. He cordially approved of all that Wilberforce had done, and gave him fresh reasons drawn from his own knowledge of Paulina's history to make Wilberforce satisfied that he had taken the right course. But Clarkson kept thinking all the time how unsuccessful had been his attempt to induce Gabrielle to listen to reason. Wilberforce seemingly had had his own way without any trouble, and spoke almost as one who already had authority in the matter. The African exploring enterprise began to commend itself more and more to the younger brother while he listened to the narrative of the elder.

'I think I shall ask her to marry me, Clarkson; I really think I shall,' Wilberforce said abruptly.

'You haven't done so yet?'

'No, I haven't done so yet. I have been turning it over in my mind; I begin to think more and more that it would be the very best thing I could do. Don't you think so, Clarkson, eh?'

'She would make any man whom she married very happy, I am sure; unless he were a very stupid man,' Clarkson said emphatically. His brother's eyes lighted with pleasure.

'The thing is, would she have me, Clarkson? There's the rub, isn't it? I'm not young, you see; not what she would call young; and I'm not particularly good-looking; never was; and I'm not clever. I shouldn't like to ask her, if I were to be refused; I don't mind about myself the being refused; I mean I should not

hesitate about asking her on that ground merely ; a man must take his chance—eh ? But I shouldn't like the idea of annoying her, you know ; and then perhaps if she wouldn't marry me it wouldn't be right to go and see her any more for a long time ; and, by Jove, Clarkson, I shouldn't like that one bit. Do you know I have a great idea of taking Leven into my confidence ; he's a nice fellow Leven. Do you know him ?—no ? You must know him. Come over there with me one day. To ask Leven whether he thinks she would be likely to have me—there wouldn't be anything indelicate in that, Clarkson, you don't think ?'

Sir Wilberforce talked on, and Clarkson had to listen and do his best not to seem either disturbed or wanting in interest. Then Sir Wilberforce proposed that they should both call on Gabrielle that day.

'She'll be glad to see you, Clarkson ; she thinks you are a little huffed, I believe, or something of that sort, because she didn't take your advice about that woman ; but you are not of course, are you ? I told her I was sure you were not. Now you shall go and pay her a visit along with me, and we'll show her that you are not a bit put out ; and she'll be pleased, I know.'

Did Clarkson like to go ? Did he dislike to go ? He could not have told any one ; he could not have made it clear to himself if he had tried. A wise and strong man doubtless would not have gone ; but on the other hand a still wiser and stronger man would surely have gone and schooled his feelings so that no one should suspect that he was concerned about anything in particular. Clarkson decided to go. In his heart he was glad of any excuse for seeing Gabrielle, and he told his reason and conscience that it was necessary he should go lest Wilberforce should suspect anything and be put to useless pain. His feelings towards Wilberforce were a curious compound of gratitude, affection, and a sort of compassion, such as one has for some child or woman whose simple goodness deprecates intellectual criticism.

They walked to Gabrielle's, and Wilberforce talked all the way of his projects and successes in the application of practical science to English domestic life. Clarkson compelled himself to listen and answer, although he sometimes longed to shout out as a relief to the tension of his feelings. At Gabrielle's a surprise awaited the brothers. A visitor was there whom they never expected to see. They found Mrs. Leven in affectionate companionship with Gabrielle.

Walter Taxal in the fulness of his emotions told Mrs. Leven the first time he met her of his bitter disappointment and of Gabrielle's unconquerable devotion to the memory of Albe-

Poor Taxal never supposed that he had any rival but the dead Albert. He knew that Albert's mother credited Albert's widow with a desire to marry again, and many warning hints had given him to understand that Mrs. Leven suspected Gabrielle of a desire to marry him. Inspired partly by a kind of resentment, as if Mrs. Leven had betrayed him to his disappointment, and partly by a chivalrous resolve to set Gabrielle right in Mrs. Leven's eyes, the young man told all that had happened to him; how he had made manly love and been rejected, and not merely rejected but rebuked, and how he had come away from Gabrielle's presence and her remonstrances almost as penitent as if he had been doing some wrong. Albert Vanthorpe, according to him, was the girl's saint. She was devoting herself to his memory; she would bury her youth in his grave.

Then with a rush Mrs. Leven's old affection for the young woman came back. The girl who thus honoured Constance Leven's son could not be unworthy of Constance Leven's love. Even in her best moods Mrs. Leven regarded things and people in the light of personal property or appanages. She loved her son Albert while he continued devoted to her; she was angry with him when he became devoted to Gabrielle. She never could forgive the elder son who had shown that he could live without her. She loved Gabrielle while Gabrielle was like a particularly submissive daughter. She grew angry with the girl when Gabrielle showed that she could have a will and a conscience of her own. But now Gabrielle had proved her devotion to the memory of Constance Leven's son, and this was homage to Constance Leven. She had a fitful nature, swept every now and then from the moorings of conscience and reason by some strong and stormy gust of emotion. She quarrelled with her son Philip in a fit of emotion; she quarrelled with Gabrielle in the same way; she had married Major Leven in the same way. Now came another current of emotion, and it drove her to Gabrielle's side. It was characteristic of Mrs. Leven that she never for a moment doubted as to the manner in which her overtures would be received. She simply pardoned Gabrielle. She told her husband that she was greatly pleased by the young woman's devotion to Albert's memory. She ordered her carriage, and straightway delighted and bewildered Gabrielle by presenting herself in her daughter-in-law's house and announcing that she had made up her mind to forgive Gabrielle and that they were to be friends once more. It was on the very day of this reconciliation that Sir Wilberforce and Fielding went together to see Gabrielle.

They found Gabrielle overflowing with the rapture of her

recovered friendship. Her joy shone through her. She besought of Wilberforce and Clarkson to be witnesses of, and sharers in, her happiness. Wilberforce was simply delighted. He thought it all did the highest honour to her head and heart. It was another reason for admiration of her to find that she was so devoted to the elder lady. 'Gad, there isn't too much of that sort of thing among girls to-day,' he thought. He liked Mrs. Leven, too, from the first. There was something imposing and stately about her. If a man must have a mother-in-law he thought it was not easy to see how he could have a nicer mother-in-law than that, and, by Jove, he didn't believe half the bad things that were said about mothers-in-law. He had thought of this even before Mrs. Leven's reconciliation with Gabrielle, and now of course he was prepared to like her all the better. Mrs. Leven for her part much liked him. He seemed so good-humoured, so respectable, and so strong, that she could not but like him. She was getting not to like young men much. They were all too opinionated, too full of their own whims and conceits. They thought too much of themselves in every way. She found herself thinking that if she were to have a son-in-law she should like just such a man as Sir Wilberforce Fielding. Even at that moment she wondered what Gabrielle thought of him, and she began to find the doubt coming up in her mind whether it would not be wrong to expect Gabrielle to live lonely all her life because of her devotion to Albert Vanthorpe's memory.

The younger Fielding she did not like at all, and Fielding disliked her with a curious instinct. He would have disliked her because she had treated Gabrielle so badly all this long time, but he disliked her now because she had chosen to be reconciled in that imperious and queenly way, and because Gabrielle put up with it and did homage for it, and was overwhelmed with joy because of it. In truth he found himself perhaps for the moment of less importance than he could have liked in that little circle. He did not seem to have any particular place there. He felt sure Mrs. Leven would put Gabrielle against him if she could, and Gabrielle now was in a mood of mind to believe anything Mrs. Leven told her.

Yet Gabrielle did not neglect Fielding. On the contrary, she thanked and praised him again and again for the earnest advice he had given her, and she told Mrs. Leven how much she was obliged to him and how ungracious she feared she had been. Mrs. Leven from the first moment felt an antipathy to the young man, and thought his presence there of sinister import. She remembered what Major Leven had told her of him; she saw in him the very

young man to turn a girl away from the deference and devotion due to her elders.

‘Your brother is not like you, Sir Wilberforce,’ she said in an undertone; ‘I should never have known him to be any one of your family.’

‘Well, Clarkson’s so much younger, you see,’ the good-natured Wilberforce explained. ‘And then, Mrs. Leven, he’s such a good-looking young fellow. We hadn’t the same mother, you know; and he’s been all about the world, while I have been stagnating here.’

‘Yes, I heard that he was a good deal about the world,’ Mrs. Leven said with significant emphasis.

‘And he wants to go all about the world again, Mrs. Leven, much to my dissatisfaction, I can assure you. I tell him that he had much better remain at home and settle down.’

‘Young men find it very hard to settle down, I believe, when they have lived much of that sort of life. I have had some experience of that kind in my own family.’

‘Yes, yes; so I have heard; sorry to hear it; great trouble to you, of course.’

‘We owe a great deal to your kindness and energy in that matter, Sir Wilberforce—of the person who unfortunately was married by my elder son.’

‘Don’t mention it,’ Sir Wilberforce hastened to say. ‘I thought it was a pity, you know, that Mrs. Vanthorpe should be troubled, and I was afraid that she would be put upon—wouldn’t understand things—that’s why I took the liberty of calling on Major Leven about it; and very good of you both, I’m sure, to forgive my intrusion.’

‘It is not always,’ Mrs. Leven said with a sigh, ‘that one can find such delicate and judicious advice and help in a family disgrace; for of course it is a disgrace.’

‘Oh, by Jove, you know, as to that, every family has something of that kind, I dare say, if we only knew. There will be wild young fellows always. But I hope you have not heard any more from that lady—that person, Mrs. Leven.’

‘We have not heard from her since. No. Major Leven is in some alarm about her, unnecessarily, I think. She has no claim on us any further. We made her what I think a very liberal offer, and she rejected it insolently. I don’t see what more she can have to do with us. I am not in the least uneasy about anything she can do.’

‘Still, I think I would have bought her off, if I were you,’ *Fielding the younger* said. Gabrielle and he had now joined in

the conversation on the mention of Paulina. 'She's capable of anything.'

'We offered her a yearly sum enough to maintain her in respectability,' Mrs. Leven answered in somewhat stately style; 'I would not consent to go any further than that.'

'It's no use standing on one's dignity with a woman of that kind,' Fielding urged. 'She can annoy you, and you can't annoy her.'

'I don't believe the poor creature is half as bad as all that,' Gabrielle pleaded earnestly. 'She showed by her conduct in this house that she has some generous impulses.'

Something was said about the alarm given to poor Miss Elvin, which, however, only seemed to amuse Sir Wilberforce.

'Where is that girl now?' Fielding asked in his abrupt way, turning to Gabrielle.

'She has gone on a visit to Lady Honeybell's; Lady Honeybell is very kind to her.'

'I'd let her stay at Lady Honeybell's, if I were you,' said Fielding. 'I don't like that girl; there's something treacherous about her look.'

'It seems to me that you don't like any of my friends,' Gabrielle said.

'That young man gives his opinion much too dogmatically,' Mrs. Leven thought to herself. 'If I were Gabrielle I would not allow him to talk in that sort of way. I must advise her. How unlike he is to his brother!'

'Major Leven is having a great meeting somewhere to-night, isn't he?' Sir Wilberforce asked her.

'He is—at St. James's Hall. Something about a colony. I do not quite understand the subject.'

'Sure to be some good cause,' Sir Wilberforce politely said.

'Major Leven only lives for every good cause,' Gabrielle declared with fervour.

'Young Taxal is to speak, I see,' Sir Wilberforce said. 'I should like to go if I cared more about politics: but I don't. Are you going, Mrs. Leven?'

'No; I did not think of going; unless, Gabrielle, you would like to come, dear?'

'Oh, no,' Gabrielle answered hastily, and growing a little red; 'I should not like to go.'

Mrs. Leven at once understood Gabrielle's reason for not going, and her confusion. It was because Walter Taxal was to be there. 'Very proper and very becoming on her part,' she thought—'she is a dear girl, and my own Gabrielle still!'

The brothers presently went away. As Clarkson was going, Gabrielle held out her hand to him and looked in his face with an expression of so much happiness and such an appeal for his sympathy in her happiness, that the heart of the young man was touched to the quick. She seemed so joyous, so anxious that all the world should share her joy, so unconscious of any reason why any one now should not be happy, that it seemed to him as if a formal declaration from her that she cared nothing about him could not have been more conclusive. Some expression of this must have come into his face, for he saw a sudden look of surprise and almost of pain come into hers. She felt as if for some unknown reason the friend to whom she specially looked for sympathy in her happiness was refusing it to her.

‘Why should she care about me?’ he thought. ‘She will marry Wilberforce and be very happy.’ His mind was more than ever made up to leave England. He now only thought of how this could be done with least pain to his brother. ‘*She will not care.*’

CHAPTER XXIV.

‘FURENS QUID FEMINA.’

THE great public meeting about which Sir Wilberforce spoke to Mrs. Leven took place that night. It was to be a grand popular, not to say national, demonstration. People were streaming into St. James’s Hall for more than an hour before the opening of the proceedings. Huge placards at the doors invited the public to keep streaming in still. The stalls, the whole floor of the hall, the galleries, and the platform—admission to this latter place being for those privileged with special tickets—were soon filled by an excited crowd. Major Leven and his friends had found a really delightful grievance to charge against the government. The Colonial Office had intimated to the colonists of Victorietta that it would be a proper thing for them to take on themselves a certain share of the cost of defending the colony against invasion on the part of any aggressive foreign power. The colony of Victorietta had been for a long time anxious to connect itself with the great political movements of the world. It had looked with jealousy upon the exciting complications, entanglements, and dangers which other dependencies of the British Crown were privileged to enjoy. Canada, India, New Zealand, the Cape, even Jamaica, occasionally gave subject for great political and parliamentary excitement, while ambitious Victorietta was hardly ever named in the British Senate. This was humiliating for some of the nobler spirits among the

colonists. They therefore got up a panic of invasion. It became a theory with them that the eyes of all foreign states hostile to England, or jealous of her, were fixed with especial keenness on the little colony, and that the unfriendly statesmanship of continental Europe regarded Victoriotta as the very place where the severest blow could be given to England's strength and pride. Victoriotta was a small island situated in the midst of a positive waste of ocean. It was not known even by name in most of the continental chancelleries. Many otherwise excellent maps omitted to give it a place. But the colonists nevertheless persuaded themselves that the eyes of hostile Europe were on them, and that projects for the invasion of Victoriotta were occupying the minds of the French, the Germans, the Russians, the Americans, and the Fenians. They got up an elaborate and extensive plan of fortifications and they called for the loan of a fleet and an army from the parent country. The colonial minister refused to believe in any imminent danger. He pointed with pedantic official obstinacy to the fact that there was no continent anywhere nearer to the island than three thousand miles, and that her nearest neighbour was a great English colony. The statesmen of Victoriotta were not to be thus put off. They pressed their demand again and again; they sent a deputation to London; they besieged the Colonial Office. The Colonial Office held out, and would go no further than an offer to bear part of the expense if the alarmed islanders would bear the remainder; and the expense was in any case to be only that of a very much moderated project of fortification and defence. Then the deputation turned to the British public and got hold of Major Leven and Walter Taxal. A pretty vigorous agitation set in. The newspapers took up the quarrel. It was made the subject of several questions, various notices of motion and one 'count-out' in the House of Commons. The impression on one side of the controversy was that the glory of England was gone for ever if the patriotic representations of Victoriotta should be disregarded by a degenerate British Ministry. The contention, on the other hand, was that the last straw would be laid upon the back of that cruelly overburdened camel the British taxpayer if the cost of any part of the defences of Victoriotta were to be imposed on him. The one class of patriots appealed to the memories of Drake and Raleigh; the other to the economical precepts of Mr. Cobden.

Major Leven flung himself into the battle. He was heart and soul with the cause of Victoriotta. He would have gone in, if the colonial patriots desired it, for fortifying their island with a triple wall of brass. He listened with full and ready faith to all the stories which told of plans actually drawn up by the mili-

tary authorities of St. Petersburg, or Berlin, or Washington, for the occupation of Victoriotta in the event of a war with England. He had no words strong enough to express his indignation and contempt for the unworthy and unpatriotic ministry who could think of the money cost on such an occasion. He got up the meeting at St. James's Hall. A peer who had in his long-past early days been under-secretary for the colonies for about three months, and was never invited to occupy any office again, was announced as the chairman of the meeting. The people of England, men and women, were invited by placard to attend in their thousands and stand up for the rights of the colonies which are at once the ornament and the strength of England. Major Leven's name was put prominently forward as one of the speakers. The night came, and the hall, as we have said, was crowded. It was evident from the first that opinion was not wholly unanimous. Major Leven represented the more popular side undoubtedly, and the more numerous party; but there was a considerable force of economical dissent and scepticism. The ladies of England were not unrepresented. Claudia Lemuel and some of her friends were in one of the galleries.

Walter Taxal was present. He had promised to speak, and he kept his word, although it must be owned that his mind was almost as far away from the hall as the slighted Victoriotta itself. Mr. Lefussis was bustling about the committee-room and the platform full of excitement and hyperbole. The Chairman spoke, and his speech was listened to with that respect which the British public usually show for a peer well stricken in years, who is understood to have held office in the dim time when there really were English statesmen. Walter Taxal spoke with great vigour and fluency. No one would have thought that the young man was deeply depressed at heart, and that for the moment he honestly believed life for the rest to be a blank to him. Mr. Lefussis spoke, but became somewhat too excited and sputtered a little, and was unlucky enough to raise a laugh or two, thereby putting the meeting somewhat out of tune for the first time. Mr. Lefussis became angry, and declared in vehement tone that that was no occasion for laughter to any true-hearted Englishman. This, however, did not do much good, and Mr. Lefussis finished up rather a failure. Major Leven set about to retrieve the prestige of the cause.

Major Leven spoke with a fervour of sincerity and conviction that well nigh supplied the place of eloquence. He denounced the iniquity of the ministers, Liberal or Conservative, be they who they might, who would neglect and discard a loyal and devoted colony, however small. He made a telling point by comparing

Victorietta to an unhappy step-daughter, who, rejected from the hearth that ought to have burned for her with a genial and protecting glow, is sent out to be at the mercy of a cold and heartless world. The impression produced by the closing sentences was decidedly good. Mr. Lefussis, who now took on himself to act the part of fugleman, rose to his feet and directed the rounds of applause by waving his kerchief energetically round his head. The audience were fairly hit home, it would seem, and even the grumblers and the malcontent hardly ventured to breathe their dissent in tones above a whispered sneer.

But when the repeated applause was at length allowed to die away and some other orator was preparing to take up the tale, the audience were amazed to hear the voice of a woman send shrilly through the hall the following remarkable words:

‘Mr. Chairman, before you go any further, sir, I want to ask Major Leven why he turned his own step-daughter out of doors, and left her to starve or to beg? As we are on the subject of step-daughters, perhaps he would not mind telling the meeting something about his own conduct and his wife’s to their step-daughter.’

The words, though all clearly spoken, were rattled off so volubly that they were got fairly into the ears of the assembly before any one had time even to cry ‘order.’ Every eye was turned on the new speaker. There she stood in one of the central rows of the stalls, a tall, handsome woman, who kept her attitude of orator with entire composure, and was evidently determined to address the audience at some length upon this rather inappropriate family topic. Then there were loud cries of ‘order, order,’ from those who sympathised with the object of the meeting, and ironical calls of ‘bravo,’ ‘hear, hear,’ ‘woman’s rights for ever,’ and other such irreverent interjections from the few who liked to see a little disturbance of any kind. ‘Is she mad?’ several cool neutrals were heard to ask of each other. Some ladies in the neighbourhood of the fair speaker were alarmed and tried to get out of their seats, but could not for the pressure of the crowd.

‘I am not mad!’ exclaimed, in tones growing yet more shrilly, the undaunted woman, ‘although I have been treated so as to make any woman mad. I won’t hear a man talking about step-daughters like a hypocrite, when he has had his own step-daughter turned out of the house into the streets. I’m her—let him deny it if he can.’

Wild clamour followed this declaration. Major Leven rose to his feet, and was seen to be gesticulating earnestly, but no word he spoke reached the bewildered audience. Evidently Paulina

Vanthorpe—for it was she, we need hardly say, who claimed a hearing—had some sympathisers or confederates among the audience: there were cries of ‘hear her, hear her,’ ‘let the woman speak,’ ‘she’s not mad,’ ‘she’s all right enough,’ ‘no police here,’ ‘fair play for the lady,’ and various other such expressions of opinion.

‘I ask to be heard,’ screamed the much-injured woman. ‘If this is a meeting of English men and women, I know they won’t refuse me a hearing. I’ll show you what sort of men are trying to pass off as patriots and philanthropists’—for it has to be recorded that thus, and not otherwise, did Paulina pronounce the rather trying word. Shouts of anger, laughter, and applause followed this outburst of emotional eloquence. The platform was observed to be in wild commotion. Excited conference was going on between Major Leven, the Chairman, Mr. Lefussis, and others. Some of the promoters of the meeting had managed to get out at the back of the platform, and to bring in a policeman or two at the other end of the hall. But the policemen could do nothing. They could not get to Paulina through the crowd; and in any case Paulina could only be considered as a speaker who seemed anxious to introduce irrelevant topics into her speech. It was a question for the authority of the Chairman rather than that of the ministers of the law. Paulina’s quick eye detected the presence of the police.

‘He wants to have me removed by the police,’ she cried. ‘He is afraid to face the truth—he knows he cannot deny what I say of him. I ask of all true Englishmen not to let an injured daughter be ill-treated by the blue-coated minions of a despotic government.’

Paulina was positively developing a genius for popular oratory. In the excitement of her cause, too, her theory as to the relationship between her and Major Leven began to assume more formidable proportions. She had grown at one bound from his wife’s daughter-in-law to his own step-daughter; she now threatened to become his daughter. The intensity of the scene was suddenly enhanced in an unexpected manner by the intervention of Claudia Lemuel. That excitable young lady, being in one of the galleries, was aware that some woman was trying to address the meeting, but she had not heard Paulina’s words. She assumed that Paulina was presenting herself as the representative of some great cause or other, and that an attempt was being made to eject her simply because she was a woman. The heroic little Claudia pressed forward to the front of the gallery, and cried out in tones of earnest appeal:

‘In the name of the women of England I demand a hearing

for this woman! This is a free meeting in a free country; it is an outrage upon all womanhood to deny a hearing to a woman.'

Matters became more complicated than ever. The large number of persons who did not understand the proceedings at all now assumed from Claudia's words that some injustice was really being done to Paulina, and that she actually had something to say. A great many voices therefore began to cry out that the woman ought to be heard. At length the Chairman rose and came to the front of the platform and made signs that he desired to speak. There were very general cries of 'hear the Chairman,' 'chair, chair,' 'order, order,' and so forth. Many really respected the Chairman and his authority, and some who did not particularly care for either wished to have him heard because they thought he could explain what all the row was about.

'This lady is really out of order,' the Chairman began.

'I ain't out of order,' Paulina exclaimed. 'Does Major Leven say he don't know me? Does he say I ain't the widow of his wife's son?' The question was received with new demonstrations of impatience on one side and amused approval on the other. The Chairman was observed to whisper to Major Leven.

'This meeting is not the place to discuss the family affairs of any gentleman,' the Chairman began.

'He admits the charge!' screamed the triumphant Paulina. 'English men and women, you hear that he admits it!'

'This meeting is called to discuss a great public and national question,' the Chairman pleaded. 'This lady does not rise to propose any amendment to the resolution'—

'Yes, I do,' Paulina cried.

'She does, she does,' was chorussed by many delighted voices.

'Will the lady have the goodness to state the terms of her amendment?' the noble Chairman asked blandly but firmly.

'This is my amendment!' screamed Paulina: 'That we free-born Britons refuse to be dictated to by humbugs.' Roars of laughter, cries of 'order,' shouts of applause, and wild general confusion followed this astonishing proposition. Paulina looked round the hall in triumph, as if she had done something really brilliant this time, and she nodded her head this way and that in approval of herself and acceptance of the well-earned applause of others. Major Leven rose and came to the front of the platform, but finding it utterly impossible to obtain a hearing, and the clamour of his friends being as much in his way as the laughter and shouts of his enemies, he bowed and returned to his seat. His face was crimson with shame and vexation. Mr. Lefussis sprang forward and shrieked some words of which no one caught

the meaning, and shook his hand in futile wrath at enemies who answered him with shouts of laughter. The heroine of the evening being, in parliamentary phrase, on her legs, remained there, and seemed evidently determined to have a hearing or let no one else be heard.

The Chairman made another appeal for silence, and had a momentary success. He declared that, according to his judgment, the amendment proposed by the lady was not in order, and could not be properly entertained. Thereupon several men, some excited, some only amused, rose up and cried out all together that the amendment was perfectly in order. One tall, stout man, who had the advantage of a voice that seemed to clear the air like thunder, and could have been heard amid roll of drum, compelled the meeting to listen to him while he argued that, as Major Leven had proposed a resolution condemning the government, it was in perfect order to offer an amendment to the effect that the meeting declined to be dictated to by humbugs. He demanded that the noble Chairman should show fair play, and give the lady an opportunity of supporting her amendment by argument and illustration. There was a good deal of applause for this. It sounded reasonable enough, some unconcerned persons thought. A sort of dialogue set in between the Chairman and the man with the voice of thunder. It was a relief to many present when a man spoke whose tones made it impossible not to hear him.

‘Why do you refuse this lady a hearing?’ the deep-toned one demanded. ‘Is it, my lord, because she is a woman?’

The noble Chairman, with words and gestures, deprecated any such ungallant intention.

‘Then why is she not to be heard, my lord?’ the rolling thunder asked.

‘This meeting has not been called for the discussion of any private controversies,’ the Chairman said, with bland plaintiveness, wishing in his heart he had never listened to the entreaties of Major Leven or consented to have anything to do with the meeting.

‘But we have not heard what the lady has to say for her amendment, my lord. I presume she intends to support it on public grounds.’ He looked with prodigious deference towards the heroic Paulina as if he were giving her the assurance that she should be heard under the shelter of his voice.

‘Yes, I do,’ Paulina exclaimed, panting. ‘I’ll give you public grounds enough if you will only hear me. Fair play, my lord; oh, fair play! I appeal for fair play to my countrymen and my countrywomen.’

Then there was a renewed storm of contending voices, some clamouring for Paulina to be heard and some calling for the police, for the Chairman, for order, for anything else that occurred to them at the moment as preferable to the eloquence of Paulina. The intrepid Paulina herself now mounted on to the seat from which she had risen, and from that vantage-ground endeavoured to make herself heard, as with voluble tongue and vivacious gesture she denounced the Chairman, Major Leven, and the promoters of the meeting generally. Soon in every part of the room was some one addressing the Chairman, or the meeting at large. The cause of order and of Victoriotta was hopeless for that night. The wrongs of the colony were forgotten. The Chairman gave up the battle. He quietly withdrew from the platform. Major Leven followed him rather hastily, pursued by some shrieking taunt from the conquering heroine, and by shouts of laughter from the irreverent and the unconcerned. Major Leven would have felt it a positive relief if, as he was escaping from the platform, he had heard the crack of doom. Those who favoured the cause of Victoriotta now left the hall as quickly as they could. Those who remained elected a chairman of their own on the spur of the moment, and carried a resolution, proposed by the man with the thunder-tones, approving of the conduct of the government. Paulina then modestly withdrew, followed by a few admiring friends. She wiped her heated brow as she went, for the moment heedless of the paint. She was on fire with triumph and gratified spleen. She had indeed wrestled well and overthrown more than her enemies. Thus is history sometimes made. It is probable that the island of Victoriotta will be left undefended for ever merely because Paulina Vanthorpe happened to have a spite against Major Leven. Paulina is to be added to the company of Helen and Cleopatra and the wife of Prince Breffni and Florinda, and all the other famous ladies whose personal wrongs and quarrels disturbed the progress of States.

The papers next morning were filled with accounts of the astonishing proceedings in St. James's Hall. Most of the reports wooed the eye of even the most indifferent reader by the temptation of large-type headings and the words 'Extraordinary Scene at St. James's Hall;' lengthened and vivacious descriptions were given, in which of course the appearance of Paulina, her manner, and her startling eloquence, obtained full justice. Some of the papers had pleasant leading articles holding up the promoters of the meeting to playful ridicule. The noble Chairman's face grew a deep red as he glanced over the journals at his breakfast. In the fulness of his heart he cursed Major Leven; and, although

in general a devoted friend of liberty of the press, he began to think there was a good deal to be said after all in favour of some despotic system to restrain these confounded newspapers. Major Leven was even more angry with those at the meeting who supported Paulina than with Paulina herself. He waxed eloquent over the degeneracy of the English nation when men could be found with such levity in them as to prefer the encouragement of a piece of mad foolery to the calm discussion of a great cause and the redress of a great wrong. He began seriously to think of emigrating to some happier and less effete country, where the corruptions of luxury had not so completely wasted the spirit of patriotism, justice, and manhood. Of one thing he was certain—the hand of the Colonial Office was in the whole affair. The colonial minister had employed some wretched minions to make use of that infamous woman. Indeed, he began to think now that Paulina had been in the pay of the government from first to last. He declared that such ministers were capable of anything. This thought consoled him. It had the soothing effect produced upon an author when he convinces himself that the disparaging reviews of his masterpiece are the result of a vile conspiracy got up by jealous hate to crush him. Major Leven would have felt utterly crushed if he were not satisfied that the Colonial Office was trying to crush him. This thought gave him nerve to bear the light of the sun.

Mrs. Leven was impetuous. She was for taking instant proceedings against Paulina; dragging her to the bar of justice somewhere and inflicting the direst punishment upon her. She was for making no compromise, shrinking from no publicity, drawing the sword and throwing the scabbard away. ‘There must be laws,’ she declared indignantly. It was idle to point out that, although there were laws, it might not be easy to bring any one of them to bear on that particular case in the way Mrs. Leven desired. She urged Major Leven to prosecute Paulina at once—she would not have quailed, to do her justice, before any exposure of family scandals. But Major Leven shook his head.

‘It’s no use, Constance,’ he said; ‘the Colonial Office is behind her. Don’t you see, she must have some power at her back? No paid magistrate would punish her.’

Walter Taxal wrote a few lines recommending Major Leven to hold another meeting on the same subject and to have the admission by tickets only. But he said that, for reasons he need not explain to Mrs. Leven, he was resolved to leave town for the present. A little knocking about would do him good, he said. Sir Wilberforce gave hearty good advice to Major and Mrs. Leven not to

bother about Paulina and her goings-on at all. 'A nine days' wonder—soon die away, soon forgotten, if you only let it alone.' As to the scandal, there were scandals everywhere, he suggested. There was one person to whom the goings-on of Paulina gave unmixed delight, and that was Miss Elvin. The singer became quite an object of curiosity and interest herself by virtue of the vivacious descriptions she was able to give of Gabrielle Vanthorpe's sister-in-law. She became so sprightly on the subject at Lady Honeybell's, that Lady Honeybell snubbed her at last, expressed the warmest sympathy and admiration for 'that dear young thing, Mrs. Vanthorpe,' and left Miss Elvin with a deeper sense of wrong against Gabrielle than ever.

To Clarkson Fielding the manner in which Paulina had chosen to relieve her spleen seemed, all things considered, highly satisfactory. He knew that there were two sides to her nature—one that of the hoyden, the other that of the tigress. It looked as if she had made up her mind to appease her wrath in this instance by no worse vengeance than something in the nature of a practical joke. A few days after the meeting, however, the London public were amused and amazed by a letter which appeared in several of the newspapers and was signed 'Paulina Vanthorpe.' It professed to be a defence of the writer against some of the comments made upon her in the press, and against the attempt of the noble chairman to suppress her speech at the meeting. She declared that she had come forward under the influence of purely patriotic motives, as an Englishwoman, to save her countrymen from being made the instruments of a self-seeking and hypocritical clique. She announced that she intended before many days to hold a meeting of her own in some public hall in London and invite Englishmen of all parties there to hear a tale of wrong and of suffering which would make the heart of every honest man and pitying woman glow with sympathy and indignation. Major Leven writhed when he read this manifesto. 'They'll make a heroine of her, you'll find, Constance—some people will,' he groaned.

'I told you, George,' his wife said with that gentle firmness which becomes those who gave good advice that was not taken,— 'I told you this creature would give trouble if she were left at large. She ought to have been met boldly and sent to prison at once.

'But, my dear, you couldn't have sent her to prison.'

'I'd have sent her to prison,' Mrs. Leven said.

When Clarkson Fielding read Paulina's letter he began to think the thing was growing a little serious. The heroine herself could never have written such an epistle. There was clearly some



'I ain't out of order!'

one behind her. If any one really wished to injure or annoy the Levens, Paulina, under effective guidance, could easily be made a very serviceable instrument. Fielding, it must be owned, did not greatly care what annoyance might fall upon the Levens. But he was deeply concerned that Gabrielle should not suffer any pain.

CHAPTER XXV.

'SIR, YOU AND I HAVE LOVED; BUT THAT'S NOT IT.'

CLARKSON FIELDING began to persuade himself that there could be no harm in his calling on Gabrielle and telling her of the suspicion he had that somebody was backing-up Paulina. He did not care to speak to Major Leven on the subject; and he disliked Mrs. Leven, and had an instinctive conviction that she disliked him. In truth, he was longing for any excuse to see Gabrielle before he left England, perhaps for ever. He thought there could be no harm in his doing this. It would, indeed, be the wisest possible precaution against any suspicion of his secret getting out. What could be better evidence of quiet friendship, and of friendship only, than to go and say a kindly farewell to one whose regard he desired to preserve? If he were to go away in any more abrupt manner, surely it would be only putting a very provocation in suspicion's way. Heartily did he wish that he could go away as the brother does in Richter's sad and beautiful story, who, finding that he loves only too well the girl his brother loves, sets out one morning blowing his familiar flute as if for an ordinary stroll, and is never heard of more. But Clarkson was concerned for Gabrielle and for his brother. It would doubtless make Gabrielle sad if she thought she had been the cause of his unhappiness and of his going away. 'She brought us together, Wilberforce and me,' he thought; 'she would be greatly hurt if she thought she were now the means of separating us.' He was deeply concerned for Wilberforce, knowing how his brother would be pained if he could think that Clarkson's heart was touched by Gabrielle. If he could contrive to get away, people would set down his going to the restlessness of an unmanageable and wandering nature, and it might never occur to any mind that there was any other cause. Wilberforce had told him lately that he had made up his mind to ask Gabrielle to marry him; and indeed had added that he would not see her again until he went for the purpose of asking her. Perhaps it is all settled before this, Clarkson thought. If so, the greater need that he should act in such a way as to make his secret a secret for ever.

While he was in this condition of mind, longing to see Gabrielle

and yet afraid to see her, the question was decided by a few lines from Gabrielle herself. She asked him to come and see her as soon as he could. She had heard from his brother that Clarkson wished to leave England and that Wilberforce wished to keep him there, and in her impulsive way she fancied that it would be only right of her to endeavour to impress upon him the necessity of his acting as his brother wished. If Gabrielle had been given to self-examination, she would never have written that letter. Only of late had she ever thought of questioning the propriety of anything she felt impelled to do. If she had examined her own heart now, she would have seen how much of a selfish feeling there was in her when she set herself to write to Fielding. It was indeed selfishness of a very pardonable, human, harmless order; but it was the impulse of self all the same. She could not bear the idea of Clarkson going away. She felt as if she must be utterly lonely when he had gone. There was something peculiarly congenial in their natures. Each was impulsive, generous, uncalculating; neither cared for what the world or society said or thought. Each had, even if unconsciously, certain motives of action drawn from deeper and purer sources than those which the conventional proprieties and what are called the ways of the world supply. When she heard that Clarkson was going away, she felt as if she must throw herself between him and such a resolve: as if she should have no friend on earth for whom she could really and deeply care when he had gone. It had never occurred to her to think that he felt anything more than friendship for her. There was nothing in his manner to tell of the lover or the sentimentalist. He was always frank and friendly; a little abrupt sometimes; he often showed an easy and kindly roughness like that of a brother to a sister. Gabrielle had not asked herself the question 'Is he in love with me?' No thought of the kind had ever found its way into her mind. He did not seem the man to be in love with any woman. But she knew now well enough, only too well, that she could have loved him if love had been thought of between them. She felt that if it had been he, and not Walter Taxal, who told her of love, she could not have held faithful to the memory of Albert Vanthorpe.

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| <p>Besides—besides, she was very unhappy just now. A great illusion had gone for ever. How many parables, legends, fables, poems, essays, sermons, have been composed for the purpose of telling vain man that the least satisfactory thing on earth is to have his darling wish conceded? Never a man probably was any the wiser in advance for all the trouble he took in getting his wish granted.</p> | <p>Never a woman surely was any the more wiser with the denial of her darling wish. She had long had one darling wish; and now it is</p> |
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conceded; and no sermonising could have made her believe in advance the truth that is now forcing itself on her unwilling mind. She has had the protectress of her youth given back to her. The friendship which, denied, made life so blank to her, is now hers again; and is she satisfied with it? She is beginning to find out that the Constance Leven whom she now knows is not in the least like the Constance Leven of her memory and her imagination.

Gabrielle had grown up under the care of Mrs. Leven. She was petted and fondled to her heart's content by her protectress, who was very fond of her as long as things went well with them. If she had married Albert Vanthorpe earlier, when his mother wished it, the love and petting would probably have continued always, and it may be that Gabrielle would never have discovered that she was only loved as any other pet is loved—a lapdog or a kitten. Mrs. Leven's nature was in its way about as complex a combination of the tyrant and the slave as that of any empress of the East whom history or fiction had painted. She was the slave of her own will, and the tyrant of all the alien wills that would oppose it.

While Gabrielle was in constant intercourse with her, the girl never saw anything of this. Mrs. Leven was to her simply as the mother who must always be right in whatever she does. But the long separation had turned Gabrielle into a new kind of observer. It forced upon her a new point of view. The links of habit were burst; the witchery of old association was gone. The girl with whom devotion was an article of faith had grown into a woman, and into a woman lately beginning to question the goodness of even her own emotions and impulses. It is a risk for two parted friends, even the dearest and the least open to criticism, to come together after long separation. New habits have grown up in each meanwhile; new ways of thinking; new tastes. They look upon each other as one looks on some long unvisited scene of early youth. It is the same, no doubt; it must be—and yet surely that hill used to seem higher and grander; the grass used to be greener; the stream was brighter. Can that be really the lovers' walk that was such a path of poetic and romantic delight? Now it seems mean and swampy, and there are thistles growing in it here and there. So, perhaps, we are apt to look on the idealised friends of long ago. They stand the test sometimes; as the dear schoolboy spot does; and become all the dearer for it. But there are times when we find, not merely that the charm is not there, but that no charm could ever have been there if we had always had our senses about us. And this was the melancholy case of Gabrielle Vanthorpe when she found herself restored to the affection of her old protectress.

She resisted the growing conviction at first; but it was not very long to be resisted. She soon began to acknowledge to herself that she found Mrs. Leven narrow, hard, and egotistic. She saw more and more the woman who had been cold and cruel to her in the presence of Albert Vanthorpe's dead body, and less and less the ideal friend, the more than mother, of her earlier memories. There was something even worse than this; for Gabrielle began now to reconcile the woman of the Genoa scene with the former woman and to see that it was after all only one consistent individuality. Innumerable vague memories disregarded before came up now to tell her that Mrs. Leven was always the same—self-willed, tyrannical, in the strictest sense effeminate. Gabrielle recognised in her the strong clamorous will of effeminacy, and the feeble reason and conscience; the effeminate incapacity to put oneself in the place of another; the tendency to make a creed and a religion out of one's own likes and dislikes, one's whims and passions. Before very many days had passed over their renewed friendship Gabrielle felt that she had lost her friend for ever. More than that, she knew that for her no such friend had ever been in existence.

Mrs. Leven made much of her, in the homely phrase; insisted on being called 'mother' by her—as if any one ever with a title to such a name had need to insist on its being given. The renewed intimacy was very agreeable for the time to Mrs. Leven, who had begun to find her life rather dull, and had long yearned for a pet of some kind. But it was painfully evident to Gabrielle that their ways of thinking and acting were not the same, and that some time there must come a collision of will or judgment or conscience; and then all would be in the dust again. It was evident that Mrs. Leven regarded Gabrielle as bound to her by eternal gratitude for having been taken back into favour. Indeed, much of Mrs. Leven's enjoyment in the reconciliation came from the satisfaction and complacency with which it enabled her to regard herself. She admired her own magnanimity very much. She was flattered by Gabrielle's submission thus far. It did not occur to her to doubt for a moment that she had acquired the absolute right to dispose of Gabrielle's life as might seem good to her. No one could be kinder than Mrs. Leven to those who would allow themselves to be ruled in all things by her as Capulet would have his daughter.

So Gabrielle wrote to Clarkson. His hand trembled as he took the letter. He smiled rather grimly at his own weakness. It was a short note, simply asking him to come and see her, as she had something to say to him. He had often received such notes before from her. He might have compared this with any of its

predecessors if he had felt inclined, for he had kept them all safely stored. But it seemed to him that there was something peculiarly friendly and familiar in these few words; a sort of sisterly imperiousness. 'It is all over; it is done,' he leaped to the conclusion at once. She feels already as if she were my sister; she has promised to marry Wilberforce.' Then a great wave of disappointed love and of wild jealousy swept for a moment across the poor young man's heart. A positive cry broke from his lips; the cry of a pain that knows it will from that moment have to be still for ever. 'Why did I ever see her? Why did I ever come near him again? Why did she bring us together? Why is he so good and kind that I can't even hate him? He can never love her as I do; he can never appreciate her as I do. She can never be to him what she might have been to me.'

He was in the old room in Bolingbroke Place. He had gone again into a sort of hiding there under pretence of putting together his papers and things before going away. He sat down and leaned his hand upon his chin and gave himself up to moody absorption for a full hour. He let the wave of passion and regret break quite over him unresisting. Then he got up and said to himself that now he could go and see her. A pang went through him as he stood on the doorstep and thought of the day when he opened that door for her and saw her for the first time. 'After this day I shall never see her again!' Never again—the immemorial syllables of despair.

When he saw her in her house she was apparently under the influence of some embarrassment or constraint. He thought it was easy to understand the reason why. 'My future sister-in-law,' he thought, 'finds the new position a little embarrassing at first.' He put on the most unconstrained and friendly air he could adopt. He seemed to her very cheerful and easy. He might have been a little more sorry to leave his friends, she thought; but of course man's instinct is for adventure and occupation and unrest. Gabrielle did not say at once why she had sent for him; and Clarkson talked a little about Paulina, and told of his suspicion about some unseen hand guiding that energetic creature's somewhat unskilled pen. Gabrielle did not follow all this with deep interest. She had taken the Paulina scandal very composedly; she could not be brought to see that any disgrace whatever fell upon the Levens or upon herself because Mrs. Leven's son had married a coarse and ungovernable woman. She was sorry, for the sake of womanhood, that Paulina should have made such an unseemly exhibition; but for herself she felt in no way abashed or alarmed. Gabrielle still thought they had all been a little too

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hard on the unfortunate Paulina. She had a firm conviction yet that she could have managed Paulina a great deal better than that. If they would only allow her, she would try what she could do even now. She hardly therefore followed the meaning of what Clarkson was trying to impress on her about Paulina. Her mind, indeed, was on other things.

‘Do you know why I wrote and asked you to come here?’ she broke in suddenly.

No, he didn’t know, he said.

‘I wrote to you because I thought it would please your brother.’

‘Ah, yes,’ Clarkson thought; ‘I knew as much as that. It is all settled. I am talking to my sister-in-law that is to be.’ He made some unmeaning answer.

‘Your brother doesn’t like your leaving England.’

‘I know,’ Clarkson said doggedly.

‘Then why not gratify him and stay here? It was I who brought you together—don’t you remember?’

Oh, yes; he had not forgotten that.

‘And so I claim a sort of right to keep you together, if I can, Mr. Fielding.’

‘You are very kind, but——’ He shook his head.

‘But I don’t see why you must leave us. Your brother so wishes you to stay, and you seem to me to have travelled enough. It is time for you to settle down, Mr. Fielding, I think.’

‘Settle down to what?’

‘Well, to some kind of regular life. A man can’t be always travelling aimlessly about the world, can he? All that ought to be only a preparation for some sort of career, I think. It can hardly be a career in itself, can it?’

‘If one can do no better——’

‘But you can do better. I feel sure you can—we all know you can.’

‘Who are “we”?’ Fielding could not help asking.

‘We? Who are we? Everyone who knows you—your brother——’

‘Ah, yes; but Wilberforce is very partial.’

‘I don’t know; he has great judgment and good sense. Once you would have thought he was partial the other way. Don’t you remember what trouble I had to prevail on you to go near him at all? Why, I had to adopt an audacious stratagem to bring you together.’

‘I remember all that—I couldn’t well forget it. I owe it to you altogether that Wilberforce and I have become friends and

brothers again ; I oughtn't to say "again," indeed, for we never were friends and brothers before. Now, I think he is the best fellow that ever lived——'

'Indeed he is,' Gabrielle said with emphasis.

'Yes; even you can't say a word more in his praise than I shall say, Mrs. Vanthorpe. Well, I owe all that to you; I should have lived and died under a false impression about my brother if it were not for you.'

'Oh, no,' said Gabrielle, blushing slightly at his earnestness; 'you and he would have found each other out in some way, you may be sure. You would never have been kept apart all your lives for the mere want of someone to bring you together. Heaven is not so dependent upon any of us to bring about its ends. But I am glad it was my good fortune to be the medium in this case, Mr. Fielding; I freely confess that.'

'You are always doing good,' he said.

Gabrielle was thinking of instances in which she did not seem to have done good for all her trying.

'Oh no, Mr. Fielding; very much the reverse sometimes, I am afraid. I try to do good; but I rush into things in an impulsive way, and I find that I make sad mistakes. I wish I were not so impulsive: I wish I could restrain myself and not follow out every impulse the moment it begins to drive me on. I am afraid I have made enemies.'

Fielding smiled.

'Come,' he said, 'that is impossible. I can't imagine anybody being an enemy of yours.'

'Does that mean that I am not worth anybody's enmity, Mr. Fielding? If so, I don't take it as a compliment at all. I haven't forgotten also what Sir Oliver says about people who have no enemies—don't you remember—in the "School for Scandal"?''

'No, I don't mean that,' said Fielding composedly; 'although I never much believed in Sir Oliver's saying, all the same. I don't much believe in enemies; I don't think any one makes enemies who acts for the best and goes straight on.'

'But now about your going away and ranging the world all over again,' she asked, anxious to turn the talk away from herself. 'I really do want to argue this point with you. You say you owe me something—and you do owe at least some goodwill. Come then, I will release you from the obligation if you will only talk this over with me like a rational being. Why do you want to leave England?'

'Why should I stay in England?'

'Ah, that is not talking like a rational being; that is only

asking a question. Still, I'll try to answer it : because you ought to have some calling in England ; because it is your country ; England is the place where you ought to live and do what work you can. You ought to have travelled to educate yourself for England. Your friends all wish you to stay here ; your brother wishes it ; we all wish it.'

'Do you wish it—yourself?'

'Do I wish it? Of course I do. If you were my brother I should beg of you to stay. At least you must have some reason for not staying; you can tell me that.'

'I have a reason.' He stood up, and leaned with his back to the chimney-piece.

'Oh, you have a reason? Well, I am glad! What is it, Mr. Fielding?'

He wondered to see how clear and unsuspicious her eyes looked. 'If I should tell her now!' he thought.

'Surely you may tell me what it is,' she said in kindly, gentle tones. 'Is it that you are poor? Is it that you are proud? Is it that you don't like to be dependent on your brother? He tells me that you are not dependent on him—he says that the money he holds for you is not his ; that it is yours. But that is a matter of no consequence ; you can easily find a career in England. What is your reason for going away?'

'Well,' he said with hesitation, 'things will not be always the same here——'

'No, of course not. Who supposes they would? What has that to do with it?—they won't be always the same anywhere else.'

'Wilberforce will get married.'

'Yes ; I suppose so. Why should you go away because of that?'

'Oh, don't you know?' he cried, losing fast all the patience and self-control he had kept so long.

'No, Mr. Fielding ; how should I know?'

'You might guess, I think,' he said with a certain bitterness in his tone.

'Might I? then I should like to guess, for I don't wish to seem stupid. It surely cannot be because if your brother were married you think he would have less affection to spare for you? I don't believe that can be the reason ; that wouldn't seem like you, Mr. Fielding.'

'No,' he said ; 'it isn't that.'

'I thought so : I am glad of it. Then tell me ; for I don't think I could guess.'

'She really does not know,' Fielding said to himself, and the

bare conviction sent a rush of blood to his face. 'She has no idea of anything of the kind. Wilberforce has not yet spoken to her.'

'I don't understand you,' she said. 'I begin to understand you less and less as we go on, Mr. Fielding. Is there any mystery in all this? Why can you not tell me in plain words—or why do you excite my curiosity if the thing is not to be told?'

She looked so earnest and so kindly that the young man's barrier of self-composure melted completely away.

'Well, then, I will tell you,' he exclaimed; 'I was determined not to speak, but I can't help it. I heard you were going to be married——'

She did not at first see the meaning of his words, so much was she surprised by the thought that there should have been any talk about her being married. She felt herself growing hot and confused. She took it good-humouredly, however.

'I never heard of it before, Mr. Fielding, I can assure you, and I am not going to be married. But I don't see why in any case——' and then looking up and seeing the revelation in his face she stopped short in such utter confusion that it would have been a positive relief to her if she had fainted, or the floor had given way, or the sky fallen, or anything happened to save her from saying more or seeming to leave more unsaid. The full meaning of his words suddenly came on her, and she knew of his love.

'You know it all now,' Fielding said.

'Oh, stop!' she begged.

'It's too late now to stop. Yes, you know it all now, Mrs. Vanthorpe. I was in love with you, that's all; I am in love with you, that's all. I have a right to be in love with you if I like; and I can't help it whether I like it or not, or whether I have a right. I thought you might have guessed this before; I thought women always knew of such things.'

'I didn't know it,' said Gabrielle, and she tried to say something more, and did not succeed in getting any words articulately spoken. She sat down and put her hands to her face and fairly burst into tears. She could not help herself, she had no other way of giving a voice to her feelings. She had long borne almost unknowingly too hard a strain. She had fought earnestly against a growing love which seemed to her, as things then were, to be unwomanly and a shame—and now all at once she knew that he loved her. The joy was mingled with fear; she foresaw much difficulty and much reproach; and it seemed like impiety and ingratitude to renounce in this way the memory of Albert. Yet life had lately been growing barren and full of disappointment, and all her hopes were turning out to be only shining bubbles at the

best, and she was unhappy and was not making others happy, and she felt that now she would go to the end of the world with Fielding if he asked her, and she longed to go and be away at once from question and reproach and the sneers of cold friends and the misconstruction of some and the pity of others—and in short all her little world had shattered and fallen asunder, and a new, strange world was coming up in its place, and this was too much for her, and she could only sit and sob. Fielding started in alarm and moved towards her in fear that she was about to faint, and in his sudden movement his arm struck against the portrait of Albert Vanthorpe, and it fell to the floor.

Gabrielle motioned with one hand for Fielding not to approach her. She could not speak to him just yet. She could not listen to anything he could say. She did not venture to look up; she only still sat and sobbed.

Fielding fell back bewildered. He expected surprise and anger, he expected perhaps some keen and hasty words, or he might have looked for a reproof of icy coldness; but he never dreamed of such a reception for his words as this. The one thing that had never seemed to him to come within the limits of possible conjecture was her caring about him. He did not think of it now; her tears he supposed were only evidence of her impassioned resentment of a supposed offence.

‘Have I offended you so much, Mrs. Vanthorpe?’ he asked very humbly. ‘I never meant to do that; I did not mean to say what I have said two moments ago, but I couldn’t help saying it. But pray, pray don’t be offended, do forgive me. Oh, do but think of it, I am the sufferer and not you. Shall I go away?’

Still keeping her handkerchief to her eyes with one hand, she held out the other towards him. He touched it respectfully, assuming that it was offered in token of forgiveness. Suddenly she looked up at him and said in her characteristic and impulsive way:

‘Are you sure of this?’

‘Sure of what?’ the bewildered young man asked.

‘Sure of what you have told me? Is it certain, and deep? Do you know yourself? Is it sure to last?’

‘You mean my love for you? It has lasted since I first knew you; since I first saw you, I think. It will last all my time, Mrs. Vanthorpe.’ He spoke with that simple earnestness which was a part of his nature and which made his quiet words stronger than the oaths of other men.

‘I wish I were not so foolish,’ she said, rising from her chair. ‘But this is such a strange sensation; I don’t know what to say or what to think even. What shall I say, Mr. Fielding?’

‘Say that you forgive me,’ he answered, ‘and that you will sometimes think of me perhaps.’ He had even yet no better hope.

‘But must you still go away?’

‘You would not have me stay, after this?’

‘Oh, yes, I would.’

‘Mrs. Vanthorpe’—he broke into a great cry of surprise—‘it can’t be—it cannot be; you do not care about me—about me?’

‘Oh, yes,’ she answered quietly; ‘I have cared for you this long time. But I never thought you cared about me.’ She turned away towards the windows as she spoke; she was not able to look him in the face; perhaps she feared that her words might provoke some passionate demonstration.

At that moment she heard the tread of a horse’s feet on the gravel beneath, and she saw that Sir Wilberforce was alighting at her door.

‘Oh, your brother!’ she exclaimed, turning to Fielding with an expression of something like alarm. ‘I could not see him at this moment—I could not see any one. Will you see him?’

‘I can’t see him,’ Fielding said. ‘Do you know what he has come for?’

‘No—how should I know?’

‘He has come to ask you to marry him. I know he has. He told me his secret; he trusted it to me; he told me of it again and again. He will think I have been a traitor to him—I cannot see him, Mrs. Vanthorpe!’

Gabrielle turned cold with surprise and pain. She could not understand Fielding’s natural impulse of self-reproach and of compassion at the mention of his brother’s name. She did not give herself time to understand it. She only knew that he seemed to speak as if there were some mystery and shame about their love to be hidden away from the outer world. A sudden revulsion of feeling took place within her. Even in the very moment of her sudden love-confession, she had felt that there was something of a fall to her pride in having to make it. She had felt her heart pierced as with a sudden wound when she saw Albert Vanthorpe’s picture fall. But she was ready to give up everything for her love; she would have braved any amount of misconstruction and anger and humiliation for him—and now he seemed as if he were afraid or ashamed to look his brother in the face, and tell him that he loved her. To make it all the more bitter, he had called her ‘Mrs. Vanthorpe.’

‘This is a little too like a French comedy for my taste,’ said

Gabrielle, speaking with forced composure. 'I can't hide you behind the curtains, Mr. Fielding; and if you don't wish to meet your brother, you must make your escape your own way. I shall see Sir Wilberforce; but I shall not betray your confidence. We have not committed ourselves very far, either you or I; and the little that has been said shall count as unsaid.'

Fielding was approaching her; but she waved him off with scornful and imperious gesture.

'Show Sir Wilberforce in,' she said to the servant, who entered the room that moment. 'Or stay, Rose; help me first to put my husband's picture into its place; it has fallen; I must have it fixed there more firmly. Good morning, Mr. Fielding; or I suppose it must be good-bye if you are really resolved on leaving England. This way, Rose, if you please; just here.'

Fielding made one step towards her; but she had turned her back upon him. It was her evident resolve to keep her maid in the room until he had gone. He could not attempt a word of explanation with Gabrielle. He understood a fury in her words, but he did not yet clearly understand her meaning. He had gone through too many confusing sensations during the last few moments to be able to get his wits about him soon again. Everything had turned out as surprisingly unlike what he had looked for, as if he were living out in actual experience the incoherent incidents of a dream. He had entered the house with the purpose of saying good-bye for ever to the woman he loved, and as he believed loved hopelessly; he had resolved to keep his secret firm and fast; he had betrayed himself in a moment; the next moment he heard Gabrielle tell him from her own lips that she loved him and that he must not go; and then in a moment again, he found himself dismissed with anger and contempt: dismissed, and not allowed and not able to say one word for himself.

An instant or two he stood irresolute, and then—there was nothing else for it—he left the room and left the house, finding in all his bewilderment a sense of relief in the fact that he was able to make his painful and ignominious escape without meeting his brother as he went. Suddenly, with the rush as of a wind, a great feeling of joy came over him. 'She said she loved me; I heard her say it; nothing on earth can alter that!'

(To be continued.)

BELGRAVIA.

SEPTEMBER 1879.

Donna Quirote.

BY JUSTIN M'CARTHY.

CHAPTER XXVI.

'GABRIELLE.'

MRS. LEVEN was in a specially anxious mood when she went to see Gabrielle on the day of Sir Wilberforce's visit and of his brother's abrupt dismissal. The two brothers had been early visitors that day, and Mrs. Leven arrived long after both had gone. She had heard from Major Leven something about Sir Wilberforce's views with regard to Gabrielle. Indeed, anyone might have guessed from the frequency of his visits to Gabrielle what his views were. There was not much of the crafty diplomatist about Wilberforce, and his attentions to Gabrielle had become so marked of late that anybody but Gabrielle herself must have understood their significance. She had not understood it, or thought anything about it. To her he seemed simply a kind goodhearted friend who might almost have been her father. But to Mrs. Leven he seemed still a sort of young man; and of course she assumed that he was certain to marry some time or other. Therefore she had a strong conviction that before long he would be found opening his mind to Gabrielle, and she was anxious to anticipate him if she could. She wanted Gabrielle to know at once that if Sir Wilberforce should ask her to marry him, she, Mrs. Leven, Gabrielle's protectress, friend, and mother, was of opinion the offer should be accepted. Mrs. Leven thought the position, the name, the respectability of character, the British strength of Sir Wilberforce would be the best shelter for Gabrielle's impulsive life.

Mrs. Leven had forgotten her elder son in her love for the more dutiful younger. She was now like to forget Albert in the renewed affection she had for Albert's widow. She often argued

gently with Gabrielle on the unwisdom of keeping up the memorial chamber to Albert's name, and pointed out that she herself in all her grief, whereof the grief of forty thousand widows could not make up the sum, had never maintained any such monument. She was, for Gabrielle now going freely out to meet the world, and bringing the world as much as possible to her. After a while she began to go further yet, and to hint to Gabrielle that it was absurd and impossible to continue in her resolution not to get married again. In truth Mrs. Leven had now set her heart on the marriage of Gabrielle to Sir Wilberforce Fielding. He was a Baronet; he was very rich; and he was not a young man who could be supposed to come into any sort of comparison with the dead Albert. Everyone would know that Gabrielle did not marry him for love; and there would be no slight to the memory of Mrs. Leven's son. By refusing Walter Taxal, who was young and good-looking, and the son of a peer, Gabrielle had sufficiently acknowledged what was due to the memory of Albert Vanthorpe. Mrs. Leven therefore thought that all the proprieties justified her in hoping to see her daughter, as she now once more called her, converted from Mrs. Albert Vanthorpe into Lady Fielding.

'Gabrielle, my love, you look quite pale. You seem to me to be very unwell. What is the matter, dearest child?'

Mrs. Leven sat beside Gabrielle on a sofa, and drew the girl towards her, and put her arm round her neck, and petted her as in the old days. But Gabrielle could not warm, somehow, with the old affection. She bore the petting patiently; she did not delight in it.

'I am very well, dear,' Gabrielle said. 'Nothing ever happens to me; I am shockingly uninteresting; I never feel ill.'

'Your life is too lonely, dearest. You can't live this way always. Your friends all say so. You may well believe that my advice on such a subject is sincere.'

'On what subject, dear?' Gabrielle asked rather languidly. She had not been following very clearly what Mrs. Leven was saying with a sort of mystical earnestness.

'Your kind of life, dear girl. It is too lonely for one so young. We all feel it. Major Leven thinks so; and so does Sir Wilberforce Fielding.'

Gabrielle started so palpably at the mention of this name that the thrill passed through Mrs. Leven too; and Mrs. Leven at once assumed that something had happened.

'You start at his name, my Gabrielle. Has Sir Wilberforce been here lately?'

'He was here this morning,' Gabrielle said, in the tone of one

from whom a painful confession is extorted. 'He has not gone very long.'

'Oh!' Then there was a moment's pause. The silence satisfied Mrs. Leven that something had come of the visit.

'Gabrielle, my love, am I right in supposing that Sir Wilberforce came to-day with a particular purpose? There is no breach of confidence, darling; I speak with you as if I were your mother. No one could object to your telling me.'

'There is no secret about it, I suppose,' Gabrielle said, 'to you at least. Sir Wilberforce has been very kind and good; I am sure I am greatly obliged, or I ought to be.'

'Yes, dearest? well?'

'Oh, you can guess, dear,' Gabrielle said wearily. 'You have guessed already, I am sure. Sir Wilberforce asked me to marry him.'

There was another pause. Gabrielle apparently was not going to say any more on the subject.

'Well, dearest?'

'Well, Mrs. Leven, that is the whole story.'

'Gabrielle, how can you speak to me coldly as "Mrs. Leven"? We have forgotten all our old anger——'

'I never felt any anger to you,' said Gabrielle truly.

'You are a sweet girl; so sweet and good that you could forgive even a little unreasoning anger in one of a warmer temper. But I want to hear more from you about this. Sir Wilberforce asked you to be his wife. What did you say, dearest?'

'What could I say? I told him it was impossible.'

'Yes? Did he accept that answer?'

'He did. What else could he do? It was very kind of him, and all that, I suppose; but he might have known.'

'But, dearest Gabrielle, you can't remain all your life in this lonely way. It is impossible, my dear child. You are too young and too pretty. I really don't think you could do better than to marry Sir Wilberforce. I don't indeed. Perhaps, however, he does not take your answer as quite final? Nineteen nay-says make one grant, it used to be said in my younger days.'

'They will never make a grant in my case. Sir Wilberforce knows that perfectly well. He is too kind and good to say any more to me about it, when he knows how I feel.'

'You told him you were resolved never to marry again? He wouldn't much mind that, Gabrielle. Young women always say such things as that; and believe them too. I was convinced at one time I never would marry again.'

'I told him that my present resolve was not to marry again.'

But I told him also that I never could feel to him as I should feel to a man I could marry. I don't care about him in that way at all!

'He is not young,' Mrs. Leven said meditatively; 'but he is not old, Gabrielle; and often there is more congeniality in a man of that age. You have grown to be a grave sort of girl, Gabrielle; you would not find him too old in manner, I fancy.'

'It is not that. I like him very much; I like him as a friend all the better because he isn't young; but I never could like him to marry him.'

'But Walter Taxal is young; and you didn't like him well enough to marry him?'

Gabrielle had not supposed that Mrs. Leven knew anything about Walter Taxal's love-making. But she expressed no wonder.

'I like Walter Taxal very much; but not in that way. I could not marry him. But I don't want to marry anyone.'

'Gabrielle,' Mrs. Leven said suddenly, 'did Sir Wilberforce ask you if there was anyone you preferred to him?'

'He did not ask me anything of the kind. If he had, I would not have answered him. But he is far too courteous and gentle to ask such a question.'

'There is such a person!' Mrs. Leven made up her mind at once; and in a moment it was borne in upon her that some slight to the memory of Albert Vanthorpe was intended.

'How unlike Sir Wilberforce is to his brother!' she said.

'Very unlike,' Gabrielle said.

'You don't like the brother, I am sure, Gabrielle?'

'Oh, yes; I like him very much.'

'But don't people say strange things about him?'

'They do, very strange things; and yet they are quite true. They say that he is very generous and truthful and kind; and that he does not care in the least for money or society or getting on in life, and that he hasn't anything mean in him—and other such things as that.'

'I didn't mean exactly that. A man is often very free of his money, and careless about money; and young men often fancy they don't care about getting on in life—we know all that sort of thing well enough. But a man may be very wild and bad for all that.'

'I never heard anyone say anything bad about Mr. Fielding,' said Gabrielle, withdrawing herself gently and almost imperceptibly from Mrs. Leven's closer embrace.

'Oh, yes, Gabrielle dearest, you must surely have heard things said of him. He was very wild, and he ran away from his father's house early in life; and I believe he broke his father's heart. He was a friend of my unfortunate son Philip; and I have no doubt

he was just such another. I sometimes even think he looks like him—as Philip would look now if he were living. Do you know that, much as I respect Sir Wilberforce, I cannot help feeling a sort of shudder pass through me when I see his brother here under my Albert's roof!

Under my Albert's roof! Gabrielle felt an angry glow rise to her face at the words. But she did not give any expression to her thoughts. She would not enter into any controversy with Mrs. Leven. She had seldom much control over her resolves and her impulses; but she could command her words and her temper. No temptation could draw her into any dispute with Albert Vanthorpe's mother. Mrs. Leven now again often thought Gabrielle docile and malleable when she was only patient and silent.

But Gabrielle's mind was made up. 'I shall never be free,' she thought, 'as long as I live in this house and live on poor Albert's money. I am sold into servitude so long as I live in this sort of way. I have no freedom; at any moment I am liable to be asked to give account of whom I admit into Albert Vanthorpe's house, and what use I make of his money. I don't want the house or the money; and I don't know how to make any really good use of money. I have enough of my own to live on, and I want no more. I hate this servitude; I'll not endure it; I will be free!'

Mrs. Leven returned home much distressed in mind. Gabrielle had determined not to marry Sir Wilberforce, and it was much to be feared had been taken by the handsome and good-for-nothing brother, whom Mrs. Leven had from the first disliked and distrusted. The aggrieved lady felt almost in a mood to proclaim herself an infidel, seeing how things were turning out.

The moment Mrs. Leven had gone, Gabrielle hurried to take counsel of Lady Honeybell. She plunged into the matter abruptly.

'Lady Honeybell, how can I get rid of money?'

'Get rid of money, my dear? eh, but that's rather an odd question. I never heard of anyone having the slightest difficulty about getting rid of it, except perhaps the man in the story about the bottle imp—what was it?'

'But I don't mean getting rid of it by spending or wasting it. I want it to do some good to somebody. I only want to be rid of it myself. I have money that I don't intend to keep any longer. I hate the thought of having it. What am I to do with it?'

'You are serious in this?'

'Oh, yes, Lady Honeybell, quite serious.'

'Tell me all about it; begin at the beginning.'

Nothing could be more friendly and reassuring than Lady Honeybell's way. It showed Gabrielle that the good woman was

prepared to treat her not as a child or an idiot, and to enter into the conversation on the basis of an admission that there might be possessions dearer than money. Gabrielle told her the whole story, except, of course, what concerned the two Fieldings. Lady Honeybell listened in silence until the tale had evidently come to an end. Perhaps she was expecting to hear something more.

‘Why don’t you ask Mrs. Leven to take her son’s property off your hands, since you don’t like the trouble of it?’

‘She wouldn’t take it, Lady Honeybell. She is too proud; and she has money of her own, and she is not a woman to grasp at money.’

‘Then why don’t you keep it yourself, and make the best use you can of it, since she doesn’t think herself wronged by your having it?’

‘Because I want to be free. I want to feel that I can do as I think right without having it made a reproach to me by poor Albert’s mother that I am living on his money.’

‘In plain words, you want to do something that you think she will not like.’

‘I want to be free,’ said Gabrielle firmly. ‘Free to do what I think right.’

‘Yes, yes,’ Lady Honeybell said, good-humouredly. ‘We mean the same thing, no doubt. He is as proud as yourself, I suppose? Well, you needn’t blush, and I don’t ask you to tell me any secrets; but, of course, my dear young woman, I can see that there is a *he* in the business, and that he is somebody Mrs. Leven doesn’t much like, and that he is a man of spirit who does not want to take a wife with a burden of money.’

‘Lady Honeybell, I have never spoken to any man about this; nor to any woman either, but yourself.’

‘No, no; but there is a man all the same. Well, I think on the whole you are right; and I respect your way of looking at the matter. I can promise you that I will think it over, and I’ll ask my husband—not mentioning your name, of course. You must be prepared for everyone thinking you a fool; but I suppose you don’t care about that.’

‘Oh no, Lady Honeybell, not in the least.’

Lady Honeybell smiled at the quiet self-containment of the reply.

‘But you won’t be quite poor, I suppose, even after this sacrifice? Poverty’s an awful thing, I fancy, for all that they say in the story-books.’

‘I ~~am~~ ^{am} ~~enough~~ ^{enough} to live on,’ Gabrielle said. ‘I shall have ~~before~~ ^{before} I became poor Albert’s widow. I was

always very happy then, Lady Honeybell. There are people who do not care about money, and I am one of them. I had an idea at one time that I might do a great deal of good somehow, and make many people happy; but I don't think I made much of a success of it, and I am not equal to the responsibility.'

'You are too young,' Lady Honeybell said, nodding her head. 'Too young, and that's the truth of it, to live alone, and make up plans for the good of your fellow-creatures. But I'll tell you what you can do; I thought it from the first time I saw you, and I think it more than ever now.'

'Yes, Lady Honeybell, what is that?'

'You can make one man happy. There's your mission for you, Gabrielle, my dear. I call you by your name, for I like you. I am only afraid it won't be the man that I would name if I had the chance. I wish I had a son, and that you would marry him.'

Gabrielle neither denied nor admitted the truth of Lady Honeybell's conjecture. She would have scorned the meanness that denies a purpose which one secretly cherishes, merely because it is only a purpose, and may never have a chance of being realised. Lady Honeybell promised to help her all she could to come to some wise disposal of poor Albert's property. Lady Honeybell felt her estimate of Gabrielle much enhanced by what she heard. 'Eh, true enough, money isn't everything,' she said to herself. Her thoughts went back to a time long before she had any idea of being the wife of the Earl of Honeybell, and to a young man with whom she had some romantic passages, when all the world was young, and he and she were the very youngest of all. She would gladly have married him, if only her people would listen to the doctrine that money is not everything. An excellent man, truly, was Lord Honeybell, although he took little interest in his wife's occupations and amusements; but Lady Honeybell knew now by experience that money is not all—not nearly all, perhaps, if one would only think it.

It was with a bursting heart that Gabrielle returned to the home which she meant to be hers no longer. Her mind was made up; the die was cast. Nothing on earth should induce her to live in that house and on the money of Albert Vanthorpe. She thought with humiliation of the sort of servitude which seemed to be morally imposed upon her by the possession of money which she had never coveted. She longed to feel herself free again. But as she passed up the stairs of the house which had been found for her and fitted up so lovingly for her by tender hands, she could not help feeling touched by the thought that she had to sever herself from the memories, or at least from the monuments, of that deep

disinterested affection. A new life was all before her; for the third time in her short days, she was to begin all over again. The thought made every step she set on the stairs of her present home seem like a farewell. She spoke to no one, but went slowly to the familiar room where she had seen Fielding that morning; where she had spoken with Wilberforce later still. As she reached its threshold she was thinking of this and of other memorable interviews she had had in the same room, with the portrait of Albert Vanthorpe looking on. 'Something strange is always happening to me in this room,' she thought. 'Soon I shall not see it any more. There are some memories of it that I shall always love.'

The dusk was gathering, and the room was dim. The lamps were not yet lighted; she could scarcely discern objects around. As she approached the chimney-piece she could see that the picture of Albert Vanthorpe was in its place. It looked now a mere dark slab against the dusk. Her eyes were attracted by it and were fixed upon it; there was something ominous and reproachful about its presence, and about the manner in which it had fixed her attention the moment she entered the room.

'Gabrielle!' The word came in a low, thrilling tone from somewhere between her and the picture. She stood still, but she did not scream. 'Gabrielle!' And then she saw a figure rise from the ground—it almost seemed as if it might have come out of the ground before her—and she was aware of the presence of Clarkson Fielding.

'Oh, how did you come here?' she asked breathlessly.

'I came to see you; I knew you would return soon. I stole in here like a thief in the night, and lay on the hearth until I heard you come in. I wanted to see you alone, Gabrielle.'

'But if anyone had come in and seen you?' she said, hardly knowing what she was saying, and only feeling sure that her heart was beating loudly.

'I didn't care; I must see you; and I lay on the hearth in token of humiliation; for I must have offended you in some way to-day. There, you are tired, or I have frightened you. Sit here; no, here, on the sofa, and I will lie at your feet.'

His manner of submissive domination overmastered her. She sat on the sofa as he bade her; and he actually threw himself on the ground at her feet. He took her hand, and she did not resist. There was a moment of silence.

'You have forgiven me?' he said, turning his head round towards her; 'and you will tell me why you were angry with me to-day, Gabrielle?'

'Because I humbled myself as no woman ought to do, and you





seemed ashamed to meet your brother's eyes. What wrong had I done to your brother? what had I to be ashamed of?'

'Oh, no, not you, but I; at least, I felt so for the moment. Look here, Gabrielle, listen. He told me again and again how fond he was of you; he told me he was going to ask you to marry him. You know how good, and kind, and brotherly—more than brotherly—he has been to me. How could I help feeling afraid to look him in the face, and confess that I had come between him and his hopes? If I had ever known, or ever thought or suspected, or anything—but how could I suspect? How could I think a woman like you could care about a ne'er-do-well like me? Why, I remember once saying that if you would only have the goodness to trample on me, I should be only too happy. Good heavens! how could I fancy that you would care about me? I should never have believed it, if you had not told me yourself.'

'I don't know why I told you,' Gabrielle said; 'but I could not help it then, and I felt that it was right at the time. Why should I allow you to go away from England, if—if that was all?'

'Ay, why indeed, why indeed? But I never dreamed of such a thing, Gabrielle. I thought you would very likely marry my brother; and, much as I love Wilberforce now, I could not stay and see that. Can you wonder if I was afraid to meet him? I have taken you from him; he may even think I was treacherous to him, and deceived him. You can understand this, Gabrielle, Gabrielle?' He seemed to take a delight in the mere repeating of her name. 'You forgive me, Gabrielle?'

'Yes,' she said. 'I felt bitter at the moment. I think I was angry with myself more than with you; but I understand now better, and I know it must be a trying thing to you to have to meet your brother. But you will tell him all the truth, just as it is; and he will believe you. He is so loyal and true himself.'

'And you do care for me, Gabrielle?' He sank his voice into a wonderful softness of tone. 'You love me?'

'Oh yes, I said that before. Nothing can change that.' She felt him press her hand to his lips. There was a moment's silence. She was glad that the dusk was deepening, so that even her lover could not see her face.

'Now,' she said, 'you must go. You must leave me, for this time. We can see each other soon again; very soon. I will write. Is not that the best way? But this is all so strange now, everything in the world seems changed. You must give me time to collect my senses. You will go—my friend?'

She did not know yet by what name to call him. It was all too new and sudden for her to venture on a tenderer word. But

her tremulous voice gave an unspeakable tenderness to the word; and he was satisfied.

'Yes; I will go,' he said. 'I will steal out as I stole in. I should not like this first time to leave you as a common visitor does. I came like a lover, and I will go away like a lover; and so good-bye, Gabrielle.' He drew her down towards him, as he still reclined on the floor at her feet; and she felt his lips press hers. And then he leaped lightly to his feet, and vanished, as it were, in the dusk. He had come as a lover in a sort of romantic secrecy; and he had gone as a lover should go. Gabrielle sat in the soft gloom of the evening, and felt that if 'twere now to die 'twere now to be most happy. All her life before had seemed lonely and bare, a mere dull mistake, until this moment. 'Is it possible,' she thought, 'that this can last; that happiness like this moment's is not to be paid for by some misfortune?' There came strangely across her mind the saying of some saint: 'Truly the damned ones are miserable, for they cannot love.'

Then she rang for lights, and tried to look and feel like some commonplace person to whom nothing in particular has happened.

CHAPTER XXVII.

'WHEN FALLS THE MODEST GLOAMING.'

THE two Scottish poets, Burns and Hogg, have dealt with the same text in the poem of each which sings of the love who is 'but a lassie yet.' The lover pictured by the Ettrick Shepherd is in very ecstasy of happiness, and in the highest mood of human confidence. Nothing can be less than sacred for him which has been touched, or praised, or looked on by his love 'who's but a lassie yet.' The stream so glassy, the modest gloaming, the birds that sing, the grass that grows green around the feet of the loved one, the very wind that kisses her, the flowery beds on which she treads—all come in for the poet's love and praise. How otherwise is it with Burns's disappointed hero! This lover has been hardly entreated by his love 'who's but a lassie yet.' He only thinks of letting her stand a year or two in the hope that she will not then be quite so saucy; he declares that no one can woo her; man can only buy her. He vows that the real joy of man is a drop o' the best o't—being for the moment in the mood of the author of the *Vaux de Vire*, who finds easy consolation in wine when the scornful girl rejects his petition for a kiss; and, finally, in a wild burst of cynicism, worthy of Villon himself, he goes off into an utterly irrelevant remark about a minister who made love to a fiddler's wife and could not preach ing of her charms.

Clarkson Fielding was in the full mood of the happy lover. But he was also in a condition of much distress for the unhappy one who might, for all he knew, be in such state as Burns has described. The one sole drawback to his happiness was his knowledge that the same event which filled him with joy must have dashed the hopes of his brother to the ground. He wrote to Wilberforce at once, a short frank letter of explanation, in which he told how the knowledge of his great happiness had come on him wholly by surprise, and how when Wilberforce talked of asking Gabrielle to marry him, 'it never occurred to my mind that she could possibly care for me.' 'I was determined not to say a word about it,' he wrote; 'I was going away for that reason alone, because I did not like to disturb your happiness by allowing you to know that I was unhappy. I was in love with her, Wilberforce, before you ever saw her, and I can't ignore good fortune more than bad. What I thought was my case has come to be your case, and if I am happy I still can feel sorry that you are disappointed. Is it my fault if we have both set our hearts on the one woman, and my good fortune is your disappointment?' Wilberforce replied at once:

'My dear Clarkson, how could she help liking you better? You are young and good-looking; and I only wonder the thing never occurred to me before. I shall get over my disappointment, and be able to congratulate you both very soon, I hope. Tell her so from me, and wish her every happiness; and the same to you, Clarkson, from

'Your affectionate brother,

'WILBERFORCE.'

Fielding read these few direct and manly words with a certain sense of relief. 'He could not have loved her as I do; and he will get over it. I should not have got over it.' He said as much to Gabrielle.

'Oh, no,' she said, 'your brother is not by any means broken-hearted. He didn't even say he was—when I saw him. I think if he had known, he would have made an offer on your behalf as the next best thing. I have no scruples of conscience and no remorse on his account. I shall be very fond of him as a brother-in-law.'

'There is one thing that troubles me,' Fielding said, after a moment's pause; 'and only one thing in the world, now that we have reconciled our consciences about poor Wilberforce.'

'What is your trouble. Is it anything I can help you to get rid of?'

'Yes; it is all in your hands.'

'Ah, then it is done with,' she said. 'Tell me.'

'I find it hard to come at it. It's about money, and that sort of thing; and I hate even to mention the name of money to you just now. Well, it's this—I don't want a wife with money. I want you; but not your money. Come, now, I have got that out.'

'You mean the money that is not mine—that was given to me—that is the money you speak of?'

'Yes, that is it; I hate the idea, Gabrielle.'

'I knew you would think so; and I have already done as you would have me to do. I am coming to you free of encumbrance.' Then she told him what she had resolved on doing, and that she had been in counsel with Lady Honeybell, and that the only question now was how to turn poor Albert Vanthorpe's money to some good account whereby some human creatures should be the better for it.

'The dreams I used to have!' Gabrielle said. 'The wonderful things I was to do for all manner of people! The life of lonely beneficence I was to lead! And this is how it all ends; I meet you and I fall in love—first love, just like a school-girl!'

'You are not sorry, Gabrielle?'

'I never before was happy.'

Fielding was silent for a moment. He was filled with new admiration for her and with gratitude, because of the manner in which she had anticipated his inmost feelings with regard to poor Albert's money. 'True and noble heart!' he thought.

'Some of your friends will blame you greatly, Gabrielle.'

'Oh, yes; I know. I have thought of all that.'

'They will say all manner of hard things of me.'

'I suppose so; I shall not believe them.'

For Fielding could not help fearing that there would be persons found to make the worst of his wild life, in order to alarm Gabrielle, and make her think perhaps that she was venturing too much in trusting her happiness to him. His life had been a wild one in the strict sense; but not quite according to the conventional meaning of the word. It had been a life of bold and harmless wandering. It could not fairly be called an eccentric life; at least, it had not strayed far from the central principle which Fielding set up for himself. There was some practical philosophy in it. At a very early age Fielding had made up his mind, according to the phrase of a thoughtful writer of our time, as to what the world—the world of society—was worth to him. He found that it was worth nothing; and he acted accordingly. He set himself absolutely free. But that he loved Gabrielle so much now he would never have thought of giving up his unhoused free condition. But it is the fault of the story-teller if the reader has not seen even from the *very first* the depth of fresh and almost boyish yearning

in the young man for the sweet and close companionship of some loving nature. He could not have loved Gabrielle if she had not been of his own turn of mind with regard to society, and the delight of getting on in the world. There really did seem a great deal that was alike in these two, this odd young man and odd young woman, who were not anxious about money and did not care what society said about anything. As the homely old saying would have put the thing, it would be a pity to spoil two houses with such a pair.

A measureless content had settled upon Fielding. His peculiar life had taught him one thing at least—he knew perfectly well what he liked and what he did not like, and not only what he liked and disliked to-day, but what he would like and dislike to-morrow. He knew that he should always love Gabrielle, and that her companionship would be worth all the world to him. He had not the faintest idea of his possibly changing to her or of her changing to him. He would pull himself together now, he said, and do something; and he meant just what he said. He had money enough to start with, and it was only a question of where Gabrielle would like to go, and what sort of life they had best lead. He had chafed a little, at first, at the thought of his being supposed to come in for Albert Vanthorpe's money; but Gabrielle had settled all that, and he only wondered now that he did not know from the first that she would settle it. He felt perfectly happy and confident. The future looked as if it were steeped in sunshine; but the present was so sunny too that he did not long for it to hurry on even for the sake of the coming and dearer time. He was proud of his beautiful Gabrielle, and of her wild-falcon ways, which would stoop to no other hand but his. If ever a lover, since love began on earth, was loved for himself alone, he surely thought he, Clarkson Fielding, was that happy man.

‘I wonder, by my troth, what thou and I did till we loved?’ The sweet strong words of the poet often came up to the mind of Fielding, and might have come up to the mind of Gabrielle too if she had read Dr. Donne. What had life been before to either of them? What had it been all about? What had there been to live for till now? Gabrielle, in particular, looked back upon her past existence with wonder and compassion. This feeling of love was the one thing she had always wanted. She had missed it, not knowing what it was she missed. She was so happy now that she sometimes became sad for very happiness; sad through the fear that such a happiness could not last. The gods in the fable which Socrates invented for Æsop made pain and pleasure to spring from one head, so that man can hardly touch the one without coming

into some contact with the other. Gabrielle was still romantic enough to fancy sometimes that she should like nothing better than for Fielding and herself to die together. She thought Byron's Myrrha a most enviable creature, to die thus gloriously with her lover, and see no more of the pettinesses and paltrinesses of life. The idea sometimes possessed her to an almost morbid degree. She dreaded any possibility of some influence coming between Fielding and her, and parting them. She shrank from the thought that one day she must grow old, and lose whatever charm of face and form she had, and not be lovely in his eyes, however she might be dear to his heart. Strange to say, love began to inspire Gabrielle, for the first time in her life, with something like self-consciousness and vanity. Truly it was a very harmless vanity; the immemorial fond desire of the girl to look beautiful in her lover's eyes. But it made a difference to Gabrielle. She found herself studying her face in the glass, and considering her features, and the arrangement of her hair, and wondering whether she looked better in this dress or the other, in this colour or in that; and sometimes beginning to doubt whether she really had any good looks at all; and then reassuring herself with the conviction that Fielding loved her whether or not; and then again yielding to a growing belief that she must, on the whole, be rather good-looking than otherwise. All this time Fielding never once paid her a direct compliment. His love and his ways were compliment enough. He thought her beautiful, and he knew that she knew what he thought.

They met still, as he had put it, after the fashion of lovers. Every evening, as the dusk was coming on, Fielding was with her. Every evening, before the lamps were lighted, he went away. It was not fitting just yet that he should be much with her, or put on the ways of an accepted lover. So he still came to see her, as the young Spartan lovers came to visit their brides, in something like stealth and secrecy. They were very sweet, these soft evening hours, when the late summer's sunset slanted for a while through the branches of the trees around Gabrielle's little demesne, and the sound of London life was unheard in that darkling room, and the two were almost as much isolated from ordinary life at the time as Chateaubriand's forest-lovers. The latest carriages had not yet left the Park. The loungers were still there, many groups, many solitary figures; some lounging there because they had nothing else to do, for life came easily to them; others because they had scarcely any other place to go to, life being hard upon them. Fashion and wealth and idlesse were busy in their congenial ways; people were dressing and dining and driving, hurrying to Lords and Commons, and club and opera, and theatre and

music-hall and pothouse. And our two lovers sat in a darkening room on the edge of one of the Parks which are centres of life and fashion, and were isolated and happy and self-sufficing as Hermann and Dorothea might have been, or the lone pair in the story, whose fate it was to discover Madeira.

Perhaps it was because this was all so sweet, romantic, and delightful that Gabrielle seemed to shrink from the remonstrances and expostulations which were sure to pour in on her when their intended marriage should come to be made known to the class of inconvenient creatures whom lovers have to describe as their friends. It was not that Gabrielle cared in the least for what anybody might say, or that her resolve could in any way be affected by it; but she shrank from the profanation of wise people's worldly advices and grating expostulations, and from the very thought of having to stand up for her chosen lover against the accusations of sagacious elders. She knew that she would herself be accused of a want of consistency, of fickleness, and of levity, in consenting to marry so soon after she had declared to more than one that she would never marry again. In her own mind her vindication was clear. 'I never did mean to marry again,' she had said to herself, and to Fielding too sometimes. 'I only cared for one man in all the world, and I didn't think he cared about me. Now I know that he does, and what is there inconsistent in that?' Yet she dreaded the inevitable expostulations all the same, and for the same reason, because they seemed to profane the love which they could not avail to change.

These evenings were not many. They were only a few delightful hours of quiet happiness and undisturbed love before the necessary announcement, to Gabrielle's friends, of the step she was about to take. For a while only Wilberforce knew anything of the truth; and so long as it was to be a secret from the world they knew that it would be safe with him. So they enjoyed in peace their 'modest gloaming,' like the lovers in the Ettrick Shepherd's sweet poem; and if Gabrielle was sometimes tremulous and anxious, it was only because the happiness was all too new to her, and seemed too exquisite to last very long. One evening she asked him abruptly:

'Should you like us to die together—now?'

'Not I,' Fielding answered with unmistakable earnestness.

'I should much rather we lived together.'

'But if one of us had to die—would you not be willing to die with me?'

'I should be willing to die for you, if that could serve you, Gabrielle; how could I not be willing to die with you? what motive could I have for living without you?'

'I grow afraid sometimes,' she said, 'that this cannot last; and then I think that it would be a delightful thing if we were to die at once, you and I, and so make the past secure.'

He looked into her eyes and saw that they were filled with tears. She tried to avoid his look.

'I always thought that love made people brave and strong,' she said, trying to smile through her tears; 'it seems to be making me a very weak and cowardly creature. I was never afraid of anything before, and now I am always in a kind of terror; and I become filled with fancies and omens, and I think I see shadows of coming disappointment in everything. And I never was vain before, or cared whether anyone thought me good-looking or not; and now I find my mind taken up with ideas about whether I look as well to-day as I did yesterday, and all such nonsense. I used to be courageous, and not a coward. I used to feel sure that everything would turn out for the best; and now I keep thinking that something must happen to come between us. Shall I never be brave again?'

'You will be brave again,' he said, 'the very moment that any occasion comes to call on you for courage.'

'We will go away from England for a while—don't you think?' she said hesitatingly.

He gently assured her that they should go to any part of the world she chose to name, and stay there as long as she wished.

'I feel,' she said, 'as if I should like some soft place with sweet warm air and a sky without winds; and a life not so eager as our English life; and where there were not many people that we knew. I should like to go somewhere on the other side of mountains—don't you understand?—I don't know how to explain it in any other words. Somewhere on the other side of blue mountains.'

He understood what she meant. He too began to long to be away anywhere with her, they two alone. When he left her that evening he wandered for long hours, following the river's course, aimlessly, full of his happiness and his love. He often thus rambled away when he had left her one evening and was not to see her until the next. The spirit of unrest seemed to master him when she was not near.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WHAT PEOPLE SAID.

MAJOR LEVEN and his wife had finished breakfast one morning and were alone when Gabrielle Vanthorpe came to see them. She did not often visit them at such an hour; indeed, she had not

for some days visited them at all. Mrs. Leven had of late begun to find that somehow or other the old relationships were not renewing themselves. She welcomed Gabrielle's visit now as a good omen.

'I do hope, dearest Gabrielle,' she said effusively, 'that you have come to tell us you have changed your mind, and that you will go with us.'

The Levens were going to the Pyrenees almost immediately. Major Leven was anxious to get away anywhere out of town until Paulina should cease to be a heroine.

'Do come with us, Gabrielle,' he said cheerily; 'the trip would do you ever so much good. Don't be afraid of our accusing you of fickleness, because you have changed your mind.'

'I wish we could prevail upon you to change it as to another matter too, my Gabrielle,' Mrs. Leven said significantly. 'I saw poor Sir Wilberforce yesterday; he looks quite depressed.'

'I haven't changed my mind about the Pyrenees; I can't go,' Gabrielle said. 'But I wanted to talk to you about something else—no, not about Sir Wilberforce.'

At that moment a card was brought to Major Leven, who looked up with some surprise after reading the name and some words written on it.

'Remember the Scottish proverb, Gabrielle,' he said, 'if it is not Bran it is Bran's brother. Here is Bran's brother—I mean Sir Wilberforce's brother—wants to speak with me about something very particular. Don't go until I come back, Gabrielle, my dear; I dare say he will not remain very long.'

Major Leven hastened away to see Bran's brother.

'I wonder what he can want with George,' Mrs. Leven said; 'I don't like that young man; and I don't think he much likes us.'

'I can tell you what he has to say to Major Leven,' Gabrielle said quietly. 'It is just what I have come to say to you, Mrs. Leven.' She answered a deprecatory gesture at the use of the cold words 'Mrs. Leven' by saying quickly: 'Better hear my story first, and then tell me what to call you. Mr. Fielding and I have the same story to tell; and we came at the same time to tell it.'

Mrs. Leven knew it all now. She turned pale, and her lips trembled.

'Mr. Fielding and I have found out,' Gabrielle went on, growing more and more composed and mistress of herself now that the worst was over, 'that we are very much attached to each other; and we are going to be married. I came to tell you that, Mrs. Leven. I know you won't like it; but I know too that I am doing right. I love him very much, and I think I can make him happy.'

'I never thought to hear you utter such words—never!'

'Nor I,' said Gabrielle.

'I don't understand what you mean, Gabrielle.'

'I only mean that this is almost as much of a surprise to me as it can be to you; at least, it was.'

'Then do you mean to say that you have really plunged into this insane engagement on the whim of a moment, and without knowing your own mind?'

'Oh, no.' Gabrielle felt her colour rising, and her courage too.

'I don't mean anything of the kind. I have known my own mind this long time; I didn't know his mind. That was the surprise.'

'Is this womanly, Gabrielle?'

'I think so,' said Gabrielle.

Mrs. Leven remained silent for a moment. She could hardly find suitable words. She could have found strong words enough; but there was something in Gabrielle's quiet self-sustained manner that told her they would be out of place now. The rebellion against old authority was evidently complete.

'Gabrielle,' Mrs. Leven began at last, 'your mother was my dearest friend——'

'Yes,' Gabrielle said very gently; 'I am glad you remember that.'

'I used to lament for her—now how can I lament for her any more? What could she have said if she had lived to see this day? What would she have felt?'

'She would have felt happy in her daughter's happiness, I am sure. She would have loved the man I love, for my sake; and when she knew him, for his own.'

'You profane your mother's name, Gabrielle, when you use it in such a way. Why, do you know what manner of man this is—this man that you have allowed to make love to you? or did you make love to him perhaps? Which was it?'

'I think it was one and the other,' Gabrielle answered very composedly. 'Mrs. Leven seemed to her now so utterly in the wrong, unsympathetic, and unkind, that she really felt no longer anything but an almost contemptuous compassion for her. 'I am sadly afraid I did some of the love-making——'

'And you are not ashamed to confess it?'

'Oh, no.'

'Have you heard what people say about the sort of life he has led? Do you know that he broke his father's heart?'

'I know he did not; I know that his father was in the wrong, and not he—'

'He s—— suppose, and you believe it?'

'Oh, no, Sir Wilberforce often told me so; *he* never did.'

'But you must have heard what people say of him?'

'I don't know—I may have heard some of it. I don't care what anyone in the world says of him.'

'A man of whom you know nothing but that he has the reputation of a vagabond and an outlaw, or something very like it! Why, you don't even know, Gabrielle, whether he is the person he claims to be or not. How do you know that he is Sir Wilberforce Fielding's brother? Sir Wilberforce says he would never have known him again. There is not the least resemblance between them. You foolish girl, take care what you are doing. I don't believe he is Sir Wilberforce's brother at all—oh, George.'

For Major Leven now came back into the room, looking very grave and gloomy. He glanced at Gabrielle, and then at his wife, and shrugged his shoulders.

'I confess I don't like this business, Gabrielle,' he said. 'I suppose you have been telling Constance? It is all too sudden; I don't believe you know your own mind. You go on like a romantic girl; you think this young man is a hero of romance, and at war with society, and all that. You will very soon find such dreams won't do for the real world.'

'He has been telling you, I suppose,' Mrs. Leven said—'that young man? He must have some courage, I think.'

'Oh, the young man said what he had to say very well,' Major Leven explained, 'as far as that goes. I have nothing to say against Mr. Fielding personally. He is a very modest and gentlemanlike young man. I don't blame him for falling in love with our Gabrielle; I dare say he couldn't help himself. But I don't at all like the idea of Gabrielle marrying him. She hasn't known him long; she doesn't know anything about him. He seems to have led a queer wild sort of life, though I dare say there is a deuced deal of exaggeration in the stories they tell about him. He *was* a trooper in a cavalry regiment in India; but only, he says, because he wanted to see what that sort of thing was like. And he was for a while with the Cuban insurgents. I dare say he has been a gallant young fellow enough; but that isn't the sort of man we want for a husband for Gabrielle.'

'He is just the sort of man I want, Major Leven,' Gabrielle said good-humouredly. 'I wish you liked him too; I wish I could persuade you to appreciate him.'

'Well, well, my dear, of course it's very natural you should think so, and all that; and I dare say he is the sort of man to attract a young woman; but I think too much of you, Gabrielle, to be satisfied so easily. I thought you would have liked some

one quite different. I am afraid you are doing a—well, a very Quixotic thing—’

‘A mad thing,’ Mrs. Leven interposed.

Gabrielle rose to go. She thought she had done her part in making the announcement, and she did not care for any more of the argument. She was sorry to part from her old friends on unfriendly terms; but she had to choose, and she had chosen.

Major Leven took her hand kindly, and held it in his. ‘Is there no use in trying to argue with you, Gabrielle? Is your mind then really made up? Can your friends do nothing?’

‘Nothing, Major Leven, except to give me useless pain, perhaps, by saying what I ought not to hear.’

‘The truth is often painful to hear, Gabrielle,’ Mrs. Leven said, ‘when people are bent on taking the wrong course; but it has to be spoken for all that.’

‘Well, well,’ Major Leven intervened, ‘if Gabrielle is determined, I don’t know that there is any use in our saying hard things to her, Constance. But I can’t approve of this, Gabrielle. I wish you may be happy, my dear, very sincerely; but I am afraid you are not going the right way to secure your happiness.’

Nothing more was said; and so they parted. It was a relief to Gabrielle that the ungracious task was done. She knew that Mrs. Leven and she were now separated for ever so far as friendship went; and she was not sorry.

‘That man will live in my Albert’s house,’ Mrs. Leven cried out in a burst of bitter emotion, when Gabrielle had gone.

‘I don’t think so,’ said her husband. ‘You will find they have some Quixotic project in their minds; I am sure of it, Constance.’

Great was the astonishment created in certain small circles by the news that Gabrielle Vanthorpe was to marry the younger brother of Sir Wilberforce Fielding—the vagabond ne’er-do-well son of the rich old philanthropist Sir Jacob Fielding. The sudden reappearance of the young man himself had excited a good deal of curiosity and talk; and now this marriage-story came to revive a drooping sensation. The most extravagant rumours were afloat concerning the early life and adventures of Clarkson Fielding. Some people believed that he had lived among the Indians in America, somewhere out West as they put it. Another legend was that he had acted as fencing-master to the princes of some vaguely named Hindostanee dynasty. Others, again, said that he had been a sailor, and had risen to be mate of a ship. Some were assured that he had made a fortune in Nevada; while some were equally confident that he had not sixpence in the world, and that he was marrying the handsome young Gabrielle Vanthorpe for her money.

Then there came, to complicate things still more, the distinct assertion that Gabrielle Vanthorpe was giving away all the money she had, as a preliminary to getting married again. Whereupon certain ladies who had known her a little, and not liked her very much, nor thought her nearly so good-looking as some people did, observed that they had always felt sure there was a touch of madness in that poor Mrs. Vanthorpe.

Sir Wilberforce went to work loyally, so far as he was concerned, to set absurd rumour right. 'It's a very sensible marriage, just the right sort of marriage,' he repeated everywhere. 'Gad, I wish she would have married me—at least, I don't, you know, because of poor Clarkson; he's more the right sort of husband for her by far, he's young and good-looking. But only for that, I mean, I wish she could have married me. Poor? Oh, no, my brother Clarkson has a lot of money standing to his account; a lot of money for one who needn't keep up any appearance more than he likes, you know; and he's a very clever fellow, able to do anything now when he settles down. I want him to go into Parliament, as I have no taste that way; poor father would have liked one of us to be in the House. Clarkson's all right enough. No, I don't think it a bit foolish of her not to keep the property she had. A little romantic? Yes, yes; but young people ought to be romantic, don't you think so? No, no? Why not? You see, Clarkson's an odd, independent sort of fellow—always was; he wouldn't like the idea of coming in for another fellow's money, don't you know.'

'Are they to be married in London?' some curious person would enquire in a tone half-suggesting that this absurd and eccentric pair would perhaps feel it a duty to their respectable relations to take themselves off somewhere out of civilisation, in order that their marriage ceremony might be accomplished in becoming obscurity.

'In London? Yes, yes; from Lady Honeybell's. Mrs. Vanthorpe is staying at Lady Honeybell's until the marriage. Do you know Lady Honeybell? No? The kindest woman; yes, yes.'

So people were only puzzled more and more. The marriage was evidently approved of not only by Sir Wilberforce Fielding, who was universally accounted a pattern of respectability, but even by Lady Honeybell, who was the wife of an earl. Some few persons were delighted to hear of the marriage. One of these was Miss Elvin. She could not conceal her gratification that Mrs. Vanthorpe had had to put up with the good-for-nothing younger son after all. She utterly declined to believe that Gabrielle had been proposed to by Sir Wilberforce, before Clarkson came with

his offer. On the contrary, she gave with much vivacity her account of the affair; how Clarkson made love to the young widow, how Gabrielle, being determined to marry some one, because she had missed her game with young Mr. Taxal, accepted Clarkson promptly, and was terribly let in when the elder brother, with the title and the property, came and made his offer the very next day. Miss Elvin was fast acquiring quite a reputation as a wit. She felt herself growing in power with each new repetition of her story about poor Mrs. Vanthorpe's disappointment. The curious thing about it was that it gave her a genuine pleasure even to tell those parts of the story that she knew not to be true. One of her strongest reasons for hating Gabrielle was because she fancied that, only for Gabrielle and her spells, Walter Taxal would certainly have converted her, Gertrude Elvin, into the Honourable Mrs. Taxal. She knew perfectly well that Walter had fallen in love with Gabrielle, and had asked her to marry him, and she hated Gabrielle for it. Yet it not merely gratified her malice, but it positively soothed her self-conceit, to go about telling people that Mrs. Vanthorpe had tried her best to get young Mr. Taxal, Lord Taxal's son, and had failed. She liked to hear the thing said, even by herself. The French lady who said it pleased her to hear the sound of a compliment, even though she knew it not to be true, and even though it was only said by herself to herself, would find, if she studied the meannesses of others as fairly as she did her own, that malice can be fed on food as unsubstantial as vanity itself. Miss Elvin was becoming a decided success in the musical world. Her concerts were always attended by a fashionable crowd. Places had to be taken for them long in advance. She drove in her brougham—hired, to be sure, but hired for the season, and therefore in a manner her own. Her brother dressed very handsomely, and devoted himself to acting as her escort and her man of business. She was really attached to him, and even looked up to him, though he could do nothing in particular. She liked to see him well dressed, and to know that her money made him a gentleman. Everything was smiling on her. Yet she could not forgive Gabrielle Vanthorpe for not having appreciated her singing, for having nevertheless patronised her, and for having brought her to meet people like the Charltons. Miss Elvin had to the full that peculiar form of the artistic temperament which Heine illustrates humorously, when he speaks of marrying some lovely being and getting divorced from her if she does not praise his verses as highly as he thinks they deserve.

Meanwhile the lovers went on loving, and wholly indifferent to what their friends and enemies were saying. Gabrielle Vanthorpe

had taken up her abode, for the time, with Lady Honeybell, and Fielding stayed for the most part in an hotel not far away. They had, for the present, to do without the exquisite hours of gloaming; for they saw each other only in the usual prosaic way proper to well-ordered conventionality. Mrs. Bramble and her husband took care of Gabrielle's little house for the present, and Fielding came there sometimes at the same hour of gloaming, and got Mrs. Bramble's leave to sit alone in the room where Gabrielle and he had sat before. A very harmless amusement, Mrs. Bramble thought, and she fancied he must find it dull, and she once asked him wouldn't he like to have the lamps lighted. But he thanked her and said no, he preferred to sit in the room as it was; and when it grew almost quite dark he always got up and went away. Mrs. Bramble thought him rather an eccentric young man, but she liked his friendly, frank ways, and his genial smile; and she sometimes said, 'Well, one can't blame poor Miss Gabrielle,' as she still occasionally called her, 'after all.'

CHAPTER XXIX.

PAULINA LAUNCHES HER FIRE-SHIP.

THERE was one person on whose ears the news of Gabrielle's approaching marriage came with a startling effect. Paulina Vanthorpe had become a sort of heroine, with a certain class of persons who are always looking out for the victim of a grievance. She had actually taken a hall, and held meetings to discourse of her wrongs. She had mixed up somehow the cause of woman's rights, and the wickedness of compulsory vaccination, with her own personal wrongs; and, in the minds of ordinary persons, produced a sort of confusion as to whether the Mrs. Vanthorpe who addressed public meetings was the heroine of an agitation against private madhouses, or a feminine copy of the Tichborne Claimant, or a champion of the right of women to enter the medical profession, or an American lady inspired to denounce the evils of the marriage system. For a time things went rather swimmingly with her. She managed to attract audiences; she delivered orations in a strong shrill voice, with much energy of dramatic action, and on any subject that happened to occur to her mind at the moment. She got invitations to attend other meetings; she appeared as the supporter of the crotchet of anyone who chose to invite her. She was quite a distinguished person; and in more than one instance, the prospective candidate for a metropolitan borough had been asked, by a deputation of voters, to favour them with his opinions on the question of Mrs. Vanthorpe

and her wrongs, before they could see their way to support his claims to a seat in Parliament. Paulina therefore was busy, and, for the time, happy. She was really under the impression that she was becoming a remarkable public character, and her vanity was fed on the absurd applauses she received. She felt satisfied, too, that she was greatly tormenting the Levens; and that was a joy to her. But in the midst of her business, and her public triumph, she suddenly learned that Gabrielle Vanthorpe was to marry Clarkson Fielding. The strongest passion of her nature was that of hate. Revenge was sweeter to her than the wearing of fine clothes, or the gratification of vanity. The Eastern princess who said that there was only one sound she enjoyed more than hymns of praise, namely, the groans of tortured enemies, would have found a sister and a sympathetic spirit in Paulina. Paulina would have made an excellent Oriental princess, if her destinies had been cast a little differently. It was only her accidental misfortune that her early years were passed in a Seven Dials' public-house, and not in the royal Palace of Delhi.

When she heard the news, she first gave free vent to one of her paroxysms of rage, stamped, wallowed, broke a few glasses and other fragile things; and then, recovering, prepared for more practical action. She hated Clarkson Fielding. She felt sure she could have established herself safely among the Levens and Vanthorpes only for him. She had an old spite, too, against him. The bitter injury of the despised form, which drove goddesses to deeds of unworthy vengeance, rankled in the very human heart of Paulina Vanthorpe. As nearly as such a woman could go to falling in love she had once gone to falling in love with Clarkson Fielding; and she had been repelled, and even rebuked by him, in a way as surprising as it was humiliating to her. All her old anger returned when she thought of his marrying Gabrielle. She filled her mind with the conviction that he had stood between her and every object which she had particularly at heart, and she determined that it should go hand with her but she would be even with him for once. She racked her brain for some device, and at last she hit upon a little plot which for absurd audacity would have done credit to the immortal Scapin, or to one of the Raphaels or Ambroses or other gifted adventurers who made the acquaintance of Gil Blas.

It was from some words of Gabrielle's own that the ingenious Paulina caught this idea. The destinies seemed to have resolved that Gabrielle should never do a kindly thing, or speak a friendly word, but that all people living to herself should come of it, at Gabrielle's house the good-natured but many ways to assure her of the in-

terest which some of his connections, at least, had always taken in the fortunes of the outcast Philip Vanthorpe. Among other things, Gabrielle told her of the wild idea she had formed at first about Clarkson Fielding; how she actually got it into her head that he was the long-lost Philip Vanthorpe; how she even persuaded herself that she could trace a distinct resemblance between his face and that of Mrs. Leven, as she studied their features at the concert in Lady Honeybell's drawing-room. The idea struck Paulina now all of a sudden. To say that it struck her is only a fair way of describing what actually occurred, for it made her cheeks flush with a sudden crimson, and it made her eyes sparkle and flame; and she jumped up, and danced about the floor, screaming out that she had got Master Clarkson now, at last. There was a certain dash of the maniac in Paulina, along with her sane shrewd adventures qualities. In her controversy with the Levens she often found herself positively carried away by a self-wrought sense of wrong. She sometimes succeeded in persuading herself that she was Major Leven's step-daughter, or even daughter. Other slatternly minds are wanting in any clear perception of the literal truth; Paulina's was wanting in a perception even of the actual truth. The latest, hardest facts of her own life were liable to be blurred, or entirely transfigured, by the passion or wish of the moment. She was capable of starting an imposture in cold blood for a definite purpose, and was liable to become, before long, one of its completest dupes. The author of a work of fiction, once the delight of unnumbered slums and now probably forgotten even there, has left it on record that, in describing some daring adventure of his highwayman hero, he became so completely possessed by his own creative powers that he leaped, danced, and shouted all about his room, and seemed to gallop with mad speed like his hero, and like him to hurl laughter and defiance at pursuing foes. Had Paulina's early education prepared her for the writing of such fiction, she would probably have identified herself to the full with the fortunes of her favourite personage, and made its delights and passions and triumphs her own. Perhaps, if the Education Act and the School Boards had started a little earlier, they might have secured this honourable opening for the imaginative powers of Paulina, and she would have gratified her vanity and avenged her wrongs in the comparatively harmless pages of the sensation romance.

Paulina thought a good deal about the best way of launching her little fire-ship. It became clear to her almost at once that the effect of the revelation she proposed to make would be greatly enhanced by its coming out in a spontaneous and accidental sort of way.

The Charltons were in their room in Bolingbroke Place one night. Robert was working, Janet sewing as usual. Robert was a little more cheerful than usual; for since Paulina Vanthorpe had become a public character he thought there was more chance of her dispensing with his services, and he was beginning to have a hope that the acquaintanceship might fade away without bringing any particular disgrace or harm on him. To them presently bustled in Mr. Lefussis, who, although he fancied he saw himself getting up in the world again, was not yet able to renounce his humble lodgings, and was not disposed to give up his old friends. He was full of talk and good spirits. There had been certain hints held out to him of a possible change of government, and of men coming in who, on the urgent recommendation of some of his friends, might reward his long public services with some small Colonial appointment. The mere hope of such a thing was as much to Lefussis as an actual invitation to join a Cabinet would be to another man. Mr. Lefussis was already beginning to think what he could do for Charlton; and, indeed, was already hinting at something of the kind, much to Charlton's disgust.

A rapid, rather authoritative succession of knocks was heard. Janet opened the door, and was confronted by a lady of imposing presence clad in trailing silks.

'Is Mr. Charlton in?' the lady asked. 'Oh, thank you, yes; I see that he is.' She swept past Janet, who began to fancy this must be some imperious countess, at the least, whose work Robert had neglected to complete at the appointed time. 'How do you do, Mr. Charlton? Pray don't disturb yourself. I was below-stairs, and I thought I'd come to see you. This is your wife, I presume? Won't you do me the favour to introduce me, Mr. Charlton?'

Robert was pale with fear and anger. He seemed as if he were swearing under his breath. He had to do the honours.

'This is my wife,' he said. 'Janet, this lady is Mrs. Vanthorpe. You have heard me speak of her.'

As a matter of fact, Janet had never heard him speak of her. Naturally the name and performances of Paulina had been talked about a good deal when Janet's aunt came to visit her relatives in Bolingbroke Place; but Janet had always observed that Robert would not join in the conversation or say a word about the much-talked-of woman. She set this down in her own mind to Robert's conviction that Paulina was not a person to be made the subject of conversation among people with becoming ideas of propriety. She did not know that he had ever seen Paulina before; and she was surprised to hear Paulina claim him as an acquaintance. She turned cold, and felt miserable. She faintly acknowledged the

gracious bow of Paulina, and shrank back. Mr. Lefussis, meanwhile, handed Paulina a chair, with all the greater show of courtesy because since the famous night at St. James's Hall he regarded her in the light of a political opponent.

'I think I have had the pleasure of meeting this gentleman before?' the queenly Paulina observed, turning to Mr. Lefussis, and bending her long neck at him. 'Mr. Fuzbuz, if I am not mistaken?'

'Lefussis, madame, Mr. Lefussis,' the owner of that name replied. 'It is an old Norman name. My ancestor Jasper de Lefussis——'

'Came over with the Conqueror, didn't he?'

'He did,' Mr. Lefussis answered, somewhat astonished at the variety and accuracy of her historical information.

'I thought as much,' Paulina observed. 'They all did, I fancy, more or less. Finding of the body of Harold, and all that, ain't it? I used to hear all about it.'

Mr. Lefussis began to be somewhat puzzled now by the manner of her observations.

'I don't exactly remember now who the Conqueror was,' the lady said with a gracious laugh; 'but I know that he brought no end of people over with him. Anyhow, that's neither here nor there, and it will be all the same to us a hundred years hence. We ain't enemies, I hope, Mr. Lefussis, although we did happen once to be opposed in public?'

Lefussis was for once rather put out. He bowed solemnly, and mumbled some words supposed to express chivalric readiness to accept any terms Paulina chose to offer.

'I oughtn't to feel annoyed, anyhow; I won the battle that night—eh, Mr. Lefussis? I think I see the old Major sneaking off the platform now. I have had great wrongs, Mr. Lefussis, as you would admit if you were not prejudiced by your friendship for them Levens; but I don't blame you for holding by your friends, it isn't quite too common a thing in this world just now.' Paulina sighed, and laid a strong emphasis on the word 'this,' as if she were well acquainted with various other worlds where a stauncher spirit of friendship informed the beings that inhabited them.

Then Paulina turned to the general company, and observed that she had come that way to see Mr. Fielding, and not finding him in his rooms had felt that she ought to avail herself of the opportunity to visit the Charltons, and see Mrs. Charlton, of whom she had heard so much. Janet shuddered.

'I thought, perhaps, you could tell me something about Mr. Fielding,' Paulina went on. 'I was in his rooms, but he is not

there. What a careless fellow he is! He never locks his door, I believe. Anybody may go in or out.'

'He is very careless,' Charlton said eagerly. He was very glad to bring out prominently the fact that anybody could go into Fielding's rooms, for he was still afraid that something might come of his having furtively gone in there.

'Oh yes, I was in there just now,' Paulina said. 'I could have carried off anything if I wanted to, or read all his letters,' and she gave her shrill little laugh. 'I have often been there before.'

'Have you often been there before?' Janet asked, speaking with a tremor in her voice, but determined not to let this startling assertion pass unchallenged.

'Oh yes, ever so often. Fielding and I are old friends, as your husband knows. Didn't he ever tell you, Mrs. Charlton? I say, Charlton, I begin to think you keep secrets from your little wife. I thought you were like turtle-dove's.'

'I don't talk gossip and other people's affairs to my wife,' Charlton said, growing hot and embarrassed. 'Our own concerns are enough for us.'

'Enough for her, don't you mean?' Paulina asked, with another laugh. 'That's how it is. You see he's getting angry, Mrs. Charlton. Oh, I begin to fancy he is a sly one.'

'You were asking about Mr. Fielding,' the chivalric Lefussis interposed, anxious at any cost to turn the conversation to some neutral subject. 'I don't fancy he will come very often to his chambers here any more. I have been talking to him about them; he will be giving them up, of course, and I think they would suit me better than the set I have.'

One of the many illusions shining happily over the life of poor Lefussis was that he was just about to give up the rooms he had, and go into a more expensive and commodious set of chambers. He was proceeding to enlarge upon the subject, when Paulina interrupted him by asking in a tone of some surprise,

'Why should he be giving up these chambers? Why "of course?" Where is he going to?'

'Well, you know, of course, when he gets married—'

'When he gets what?'

'When he gets married.'

'When he gets fiddle-sticks!' Paulina said, turning in her chair with a contemptuous gesture.

'I did not say when he gets fiddle-sticks,' Mr. Lefussis answered with dignity. 'I know nothing about his getting fiddle-sticks. I said when he gets married.'

'Stuff!—he ain't going to get married.'

'Oh, yes,' Janet said quietly, 'he is.'

'To whom, ma'am, may I ask?' Paulina wheeled round upon Janet, and fixed her glittering eyes on the timid little woman. Janet, however, felt more dislike now than dread of her questioner.

'To Mrs. Albert Vanthorpe.'

Paulina rose from her chair.

'To the young woman Gabrielle?'

'To the young lady whose christian name is Gabrielle,' Janet answered with less tremor than before.

'It's a lie!' exclaimed Paulina.

'Oh, madame, pray'—Mr. Lefussis expostulated.

'I don't mean it's a lie for you, Mr. Fuzbuz,' Paulina went on breathlessly, 'nor for you, Mrs. Charlton—which forgive me if I seemed to say; far from it, indeed. But it's a lie for him, if he says it—and I can't believe he does say it.'

'Everybody says it, madame,' Lefussis observed.

'I don't care about everybody, Mr. Fuzbuz——'

'Lefussis, madame, if you please.'

'Anything you like, sir; it's all one to me just now, I can assure you.'

'But it really is not all one to me, madame, I can assure you.'

'Oh there, don't bother. I ask your pardon, I didn't mean to offend you; but can't you understand that there are things more important to us all sometimes than other people's names? I dare say there are times when you wouldn't care a straw if my name were Jack Robinson. What I want to know is—who says Fielding is going to marry Gabrielle Vanthorpe?'

'He says it himself, if that is all you want to know,' Robert Charlton replied, feeling a genuine interest in the turn the talk had now taken. 'He told me of it the last day I saw him.'

'He told me so too,' Lefussis said. 'At least, I offered him my congratulations on the faith of a certain rumour, and he accepted them, and gave me to understand that the rumour was true.'

'Why, of course it is true,' Janet added.

'Then I tell you what, he is a liar; and, mark my words, this marriage will never take place.'

'Why not?' Charlton asked. 'Who will prevent it?'

Paulina tossed her head scornfully.

'I will prevent it.'

'I think, Charlton, if you will allow me,' Lefussis said, 'we had better change the conversation. I don't feel as if I had any right to enter into this matter, and I'm sure you don't, and Mrs. Charlton. Whatever this lady may have to say——'

'She'll say it out in the open day, you may be sure, Mr. a—a

—Thingumbob; and she'll stand by it too. You may stay and hear it, if you like. All the world shall hear it soon. I want Charlton to hear it, and his wife; for they will tell me what to do. I tell you again, I can prevent this marriage, and I will.'

'I think, Charlton, I had rather go,' Lefussis said; and he backed out of the room.

Charlton was eager to hear what Paulina had to say. He was longing to know something against Fielding, and he hated the thought of his being married to Gabrielle.

'How can you prevent it?' he asked in a half-contemptuous tone, designed to goad Paulina on to a full revelation.

'Prevent it? I'll tell you how I'll prevent it. Can a man marry two women, both alive? He can't. Very well, then; Clarkson Fielding is married already.'

Charlton was really startled at this; he had not expected anything so strong. Janet felt as if she might faint at any moment.

'But how could you prove this?' Charlton asked. 'How could you know it for certain?'

'I do know it for certain.'

'The other wife would have to be produced—his wife, I mean.'

Paulina folded her arms across her breast with the air of a tragedy queen.

'I am his wife!' she said.

A thrill of utter incredulity went through the listeners now; and there was some horror mingled with the incredulity. They now began, Charlton as well as his wife, to think that they were talking to a madwoman.

'But,' Charlton said, quietly and almost soothingly, 'you know that couldn't be, Mrs. Vanthorpe,' and he laid an emphasis on the name. 'You know that your husband was Mr. Philip Vanthorpe.'

A smile of superior scorn passed over Paulina's lips, and she looked from one face to another, as if enjoying their bewilderment before she disposed of their doubts for ever.

'My husband was Philip Vanthorpe,' she said, 'and he is Philip Vanthorpe. The man you call Clarkson Fielding is Philip Vanthorpe himself, and nobody else!'

Charlton struck the table sharply with his fist.

'I knew there was something wrong about that man,' he exclaimed. 'I knew it from the first. I always said so, Janet—didn't I?'

Poor Janet could not answer. She dropped into a chair, and the room seemed to swim around her.

(To be continued.)

Daybreak at the Paris Markets.

THE Central Markets of Paris are the most perfect of any in the world, and the accounts of them originally published in this country no doubt prompted the Corporation of the City of London to support the scheme of market reform, which has now been in progress in our own metropolis for several years past. The dingy pens of old Smithfield were first of all swept away, and in their place there stands to-day a noble mart for dead meat. Then a capital game and poultry emporium has supplanted the defunct Newgate market; even Billingsgate has been repaired and improved, whilst Leadenhall is to be enlarged and rearranged, and, to crown the whole, the City is to have a new market for vegetables, fruit, and flowers, extending on the one hand from Farringdon Road to the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway, and on the other from Snow Hill to Charterhouse Street. London is not, however, merely confined to the City, and serviceable as these marts will be, like those of Paris they should be supplemented by district markets, judiciously scattered through the regions where the Metropolitan Board of Works holds sway. Such a desideratum will, however, never be effected whilst the government of London retains its present disjointed form, and we must content ourselves for a while with the so-called City Central Markets, with their special divisions for meat, poultry, dairy produce, vegetables, fruit, and flowers. Although situated within a narrow radius, these departments will remain virtually isolated from each other, and one must not look to them for the varied panoramic effects presented by the vast Parisian Emporium, where there is, so to say, but one site and one roof. It is this particular feature which makes day-break at the Central Markets of Paris a sight to be seen.

Curious and interesting is the aspect of the Gargantuan Larder of Lutetia during the early hours of the morning, when from north and south, east and west, vans and waggons, trucks and tumbrils come pouring in, laden with every kind of marketable produce—vegetables and fruit, eggs and butter, fish and meat, game and poultry. The markets themselves—‘Les Halles Centrales,’ as the Parisians style them—are installed as nearly as possible in the very heart of the city. On the north is the grand old pile of St.-Eustache, flanked by streets where every tenement is crowded from garret to basement with offices and counting-houses, rooms for storage and rooms for work; a retailer of strong drinks occupying every

fourth or fifth shop, whilst on the first floor and upwards dealers in feathers and *passementerie*, ribbons and lace, buttons and other articles of haberdashery, alternate with manufacturers of artificial flowers, pasteboard boxes, straw hats and bonnets; with doctors, dentists, and men of the law plentifully scattered in between. To the direct west of the markets is the corn mart, a massive circular edifice, with thick stone walls; whilst beyond are the last vestiges of a diminutive though somewhat puzzling labyrinth of narrow thoroughfares, through which the Palais Royal may be reached in the space of a few minutes. Eastward the famous Fontaine des Innocents stands in the centre of an ornamental pleasure-ground, whilst near at hand are two broad streets, the one conducting to the Château d'Eau and the Faubourg du Temple, that highway of Revolution, and the other leading to the ancient quarter of the Marais which was the Belgravia of Paris in the days of good Queen Bess. On the south—beyond the familiar Rue de Rivoli, running parallel with the markets—are the Tour St.-Jacques and the Place du Châtelet; and then comes the river flowing past the island of La Cité—the original Lutetia—where the tapering steeple of St.-Louis' Holy Chapel and the twin towers of Notre Dame stand out against the moonlit sky.

Coming from the direction of the Boulevards, and proceeding along the Rue Montmartre, at daytime a busy hive of industry, swarming with traffic, but now comparatively silent and deserted, we overtake more than one market-gardener's cart lumbering along over the paving-stones. Since midnight already carts such as these have been passing through the gates of the fortifications known to the Parisians as the *barrières*, each conveyance invariably directing its course towards the great central markets. The points of departure have necessarily been various: some may have come from Argenteuil, famed for its asparagus; some from Montrouge, celebrated for its mushrooms; others from Montreuil, renowned for its early peaches; and others, again, from Sceaux or Chatenay, whence the Parisians derive their winter salads; but with one and all the destination is the same. The semi-somnolent drivers walking at the horses' heads—with thick striped Limousine cloaks wrapped well around them, and not unfrequently with blackened clays between their teeth—pull up on reaching the market-place and proceed at once to a little kiosk near at hand. Here for the sum of twopence they secure from some weazen-featured comptroller the right of depositing their loads upon one of the adjacent footways, for they belong to the category of market-men who are known in administrative parlance as 'unsheltered hawkers.' Some of them have contracts with the municipality to assist in carting

away the mud and refuse which is collected every morning in the streets, and these at once proceed to get rid of their vegetables among the tribe of old truck-women, who are on the look-out for bargains at all hours of the day and night. There may be a little squabbling over the transaction, but as a rule it is speedily settled, and drivers and tumbrels then set off to accomplish their scavenger's job.

We note these little incidents at the corner of the Rue Montmartre, in full view of the Halles, which are brilliant with light and bustling with animation. Picture to yourself, in the midst of a vast oblong *place*, lined with unpretending houses, the shops of which, when not devoted to market trades, are occupied by dealers in wines and spirits, a dozen spacious pavilions collected in groups by means of covered ways, and provided with low brick walls, surmounted by iron frameworks fitted with panes of glass. The massive block-house of heavy stonework—a true Bastille pantry—inaugurated by Louis Napoleon in 1851, was swept away several years ago, and the Crystal Palace is said to have furnished the idea for the present light and commodious structures; which are roofed in with a combination of glass and zinc, and provided with multitudinous gates, formed of iron bars. These gates, and the numerous apertures above, favour the circulation of a constant current of fresh air through the pavilions composing this gigantic larder, which supplies not merely the fifty-five minor markets and the five-and-twenty thousand restaurants and eating-houses scattered through Paris, but also the myriads of provision-shops of every category, whence those who dine at home more directly derive their food.

Here almost in front of us is the officially designated Pavilion No. 3, which among the market people always has been and always will be called 'The Butchery,' just as No. 9, devoted to the sale of fish, is styled 'La Marée,' or 'The Tide'; and No. 4, set aside for game and poultry, 'La Vallée,' or 'The Valley'; a name borne by the old Paris poultry mart which stood on the site of a mediæval Augustine monastery across the Seine. The butcher's meat makes its appearance in heavy carts, frequently on so-called *camions*, or drays, having come from the great slaughter-houses in the Rue de Flandres, right at the north of Paris, in the district of Villette—a region of factories and canals. A bridge, spanning one of these watercourses, connects the slaughter-houses with the magnificent cattle-markets, where six thousand oxen can be stalled with ease, and two-and-twenty thousand sheep securely penned. These markets have superseded the old outlying ones of Poissy, Sceaux, and La Chapelle, just as the erection of the Halles Centrales did

away with the ancient regulations permitting pork and veal to be sold only at the *Marché St.-Germain*, mutton at the *Marché St.-Marceaux*, and beef at the *Halle du Châtelet*.

Between the time of its arrival at the Halles and 7 A.M., when retail business will begin, all the meat must be disjointed, cut up, trimmed, and either set out on the marble slabs with which most stalls are provided, or hung by the hooks above, with the prime parts well to the fore. The weighty masses of flesh, half-bullocks and entire sheep, are hoisted from the carts and carried inside the pavilion by some of the so-called '*Forts*,' or '*Strong Men*,' under the supervision of the master butchers and their assistants. Muscular Christianity has few, if any, more vigorous disciples than these stalwart market carriers, and yet, despite the breadth of their chests and the brawny development of their arms, they are not perfect specimens of virility. The stoop of Atlas clings to them, for half their life is spent in carrying burdens on their shoulders, so no wonder if their heads be slightly inclined over their broad chests, or if their knee-muscles be a trifle bent, so that their legs are never perfectly straight. Yet they are withal a mighty race, with powers of endurance that are rarely equalled. Forming among themselves a corporation which numbers nearly 500 members (each earning from fifty to a hundred and fifty pounds sterling per annum), they possess the exclusive right of unloading all vehicles bringing goods to be sold in the markets. Each member of this corporation has his powers put to a crucial test before being enrolled, and, in addition, his '*character*' must be immaculate, for the smallest suspicion of a *dossier* at the Prefecture of Police would inevitably debar him, had he even the strength of a Samson, from admission into the puissant and irreproachable '*Corporation of Strong Men*.'

In close proximity to the quaint old church of St.-Eustache, facing the Butchery pavilion, are crowded wine-shops, with flaming gas-burners throwing a broad sheet of light over the adjacent foot-ways. Here market-women, old and young, now with wrinkled features, and now of buxom build, in short skirts at times displaying a well-turned ankle, and with coloured kerchiefs wound in turban-fashion around their heads, are piling up on the pavement scores of cabbages and lettuces, which have come in cumbrous old carts, invariably drawn by sturdy white horses, wearing ponderous collars covered with blue-coloured sheepskins. Through the window-panes of the *cabarets* one can distinguish brawny-armed butchers chinking glasses in front of the bright metal bars; and here also, as a matter of course, are all such loafers as chance to have sufficient coppers in their pockets to pay for a canon of

acidulous blue wine or a dram of fiery spirits. The penniless and homeless ones, who congregate hereabouts at night-time, have sought a temporary refuge on some neighbouring bench; but the guardians of the law are watching, and as drowsiness steals over the miserable unsheltered vagrants a heavy hand will be laid upon their shoulders, and a stern voice will bid them to 'Be off!' With tottering steps and bent frames, their hands thrust into their trousers' pockets, they must wander away, bitterly reflecting over the cruel law which allows no sitting down at night-time in the streets. After a while perchance the vain idea will occur to some of them that a refuge might possibly be secured among the bundles of green stuff in the covered ways connecting the market pavilions, behind a stack of cabbages, a pile of carrots, or a wall of cauliflowers. Here, then, perhaps they will ensconce themselves for a few brief minutes, until again disturbed by some vigilant protector of the law. Harassed and footsore, chased from spot to spot, from corner to corner, they will sink at last upon the pavement, or, throwing themselves on to a bench, sturdily decline to move in spite of the repeated objurgations of the police, who will forthwith march them off as 'rogues and vagabonds' to durance vile for the remainder of the night. Is it conceivable? Paris, the poet's 'centre of civilisation,' only contains a couple of night refuges for the houseless poor, and even these were founded by private initiative merely a few months ago!

The loafers in the wine-shops will stay there as long as possible, draining their *canons* slowly, so as to have the right to remain, and not with a toss and a gulp like the hurried market workers, who have scarcely a minute to spare. Round about the Rue Pirotte and the Rues de la Grande and de la Petite Truanderie—'the streets of the vagrants,' as fitting an appellation as could well be found—the coffee-stalls are driving a fast and furious trade; and singular indeed are the effects of shade and candlelight, interspersed with wavy cloudlets of steam, that here present themselves. Paul Niquet's—the Parisian *Mohawk Arms*—of evil notoriety, no longer exists; still, in these ill-paved side-streets there are yet curious *cabarets* we may visit. A winding staircase leads us into a long low room, situated above what looks an ordinary wine-shop, and here, if you will put up for once in a way with a crust of bread, a bit of Brie cheese, and half a *litre* of blue wine, we may while away a few minutes in a society which I will admit is none of the choicest. Even nowadays, despite police regulations, reprobates of either sex congregate throughout the night in repulsively odoriferous dens such as this. Of course we might go to Baratte's, in the adjacent *Rue aux Fers*, and have well-nigh as good a supper as at the

Maison Doreé; but if you have courage enough to bear up against the offensive stench of strong cheese and rank tobacco pervading this establishment, you may assist at one of the most curious scenes of Parisian life. The den is a professional thieves' haunt. Most of the women, moreover, are sad examples of the degradation which debauchery entails, and many of the men, with their 'Newgate knockers' and peaked caps, are striking types of a most repulsive class. Ribald jests and questionable refrains resound on either side. Should your glass be empty, we can have another dose of the blue vintage, or perhaps you would like to try the brandy. Brandy? Yes, such as that bleary-eyed old ruffian yonder, with the red neckcloth and the ragged brown coat—the sharpest dog-stealer in Paris—is pouring down his throat without the slightest suspicion of blinking. It will be no Cognac, mind you, but 'spirit' for all that; what the Parisian thief in his picturesque slang calls *eau d'affé*, or terror-water; what the ragpicker has christened *tord-boyaux*, or bowel-twister; what the untaught savage has rightly compared to fire, and what science unhesitatingly designates as *poison*. 'Brandy' such as this may well make the passions rise, and of a certainty before long there will be a brawl in this night-hive of hidden infamy.

Faugh! let us get out into the street. The morning is coming now with giant strides, and the animation of the scene is approaching its climax. Over the paving-stones thunder the heavy railway vans that bring the 'tide'—the sole that you shall eat *au vin blanc* at your *déjeuner*, the turbot which will figure *à l'hollandaise* on the club *carte* at dinner this evening. The 'tide' is punctual this morning. To-day, at all events, no modern Vatel will be dishonoured or need to run himself through, like the Prince de Condé's celebrated cook, when, as Madame de Sévigné tells us in one of her most sprightly letters, the 'tide' was not forthcoming during the Grand Monarque's stay at Chantilly. But observe the crammed railway vans draw up in front of the pavilion. See how a hundred arms are stretched out to assist in removing the heavy baskets full of fish. The grated gates are thrown widely open by a score of subaltern functionaries. In the twinkling of an eye the fish is transferred into the market, and soon will be unpacked and laid out on large flat baskets, in which it will be offered for public auction. The noisy, animated scene offers a striking contrast to the aspect presented by the Halles in the days when Paris was blockaded, and when three little gold-fish or a solitary gudgeon from the Seine—the only specimens of the piscine species offered for auction—afforded the occasion of a lively competition. The sale does not ordinarily begin till six or seven in the morning, but

we may now step down into the Halle cellars, where all the unsold edibles are stored; where all the fresh water fish, coming not merely from the home rivers and lakes, but also from those of Holland, Prussia, Switzerland, and Italy, is preserved in grated tanks provided with running water; where poultry is killed, and live rabbits and ducks are kept till wanted in large wire cages; where butter, cheese, and eggs are piled up in so-called 'pigeon-holes' that hold their tons, and placed as far as possible out of the reach of the giant rats who stalk abroad at dead of night. Each fish-basket bears the name of its sender and of the *facteur*, or salesman, who is to dispose of it. And here be it mentioned that the Belgian and the English waters supply by far the largest proportion of the salt water fish which comes to the Paris Halles; half the mussels, too, are sent by Belgium; whilst as for oysters, now that those of Essex and Ostend are bought up for Vienna, St. Petersburg, and Berlin, Paris mainly relies on Courseulles and St.-Waast for her supply—the Marennes beds sending nowadays but few of their small green bivalves, and the 'Portugo' and the 'American,' though plentiful, being at a discount.

You have heard much of the Paris fishwives, no doubt—in-solent women of the Angot type, as their reputation goes, and in truth they are not at all refined females. In the old days, as now, their language was distinguished by rather too much force of expression, and a special edict was enacted, a hundred and forty years ago, making all ladies of the Halle, convicted of insulting purchasers or passers-by, liable to a fine of a hundred *livres*. Here, where the fish-mart stands, once stood the King's pillory, a sign of his jurisdiction over the market folk. Offenders sentenced to public exposure were shown to the crowd on a platform revolving round a conical-capped tower, nigh to which was the residence of 'Monsieur de Paris,' the Red-handed Man of the Axe, who moreover derived his maintenance from a tax levied on the good people of the Halles. When Jacques d'Armagnac was beheaded on the market-place, in 1477, before mounting the scaffold he prayed for the last time in the fish-mart, which out of honour for his rank was washed and perfumed with vinegar. Still the aspersions, however liberal, failed to rob the spot of its piscatory odour, inhaling which the noble miscreant passed out of the world. There is an old but erroneous legend to the effect that his children were stationed underneath the scaffold during the execution, so that by a refinement of cruelty they might be baptized with his blood.

From the fish market we may now stroll towards the pavilions where vegetables, fruit, and flowers are offered for sale. Here, also, carts are being emptied by herculean 'strong men,' whose sleeve-

less doublets of coarse Utrecht velvet and large-brimmed hats, covered with Spanish white, keep their burdens well in position on their necks and shoulders, and allow their hands to remain free. There are seasons when all the wealth of the vegetable and floral world displays itself at the Paris Halles, when the eye lights on just such a chromatic scale as Zola has so picturesquely described in his 'Ventre de Paris.' The palettes of Rubens, Titian, and Fortuny never glistened with brighter colours than those then shining here; dazed by which one recalls the first Napoleon's trite axiom, that the Halles are the Louvre of the people. At the right moment you will find the whole length of the Rue des Halles littered with peas and beans, and the Rue Turbigo lined with countless baskets of strawberries and cherries, plums and peaches. I have seen, too—late in August—a long wall, formed of hundreds of gigantic pumpkins, blocking up the roadway on the northern side. But if we come here in winter-time oranges and *primeurs* are the most conspicuous elements in the show, and Pavilion No. 7 has only a few hothouse camellias, and violets from Nice, to offer in exchange for all its summer wealth of flowers. Not far from the Halles, in the ancient Rue de la Ferronnerie—celebrated as the spot where Ravallac murdered the Good King Henri—numbers of old women, crouching on the ground, offer medicinal plants for sale. Frequently enough among their stock the diligent searcher may come across such herbs as rue, vervain, and savin, which find ready purchasers among the Parisian sorceresses of the nineteenth century.

From the vegetables let us turn to the butter. In the cellars which we visited not long ago we may witness the curious operation of butter-blending. Varieties of butter, having been softened in warm water, are being kneaded together in certain proportions, like so much bread; and as this operation imparts a whitish tinge, an orange-coloured dye, obtained from the seed of the *Bixa Orellana*—the same substance as is used for dyeing nankeen—is employed, that the butter may reassume an inviting golden hue. Frequently, however, the dye in question has been carefully prepared from carrots and marigolds. Particular as Paris is about its eating, it is worthy of note that butter which has not been tampered with is well-nigh unobtainable there. *Chefs* and *restaurateurs* have raised the alarm in vain. The system of adulteration is apparently unchecked; and with such nicety are the operations effected that the ordinary palate can with difficulty detect the difference between the genuine product of Normandy or Brittany and the spurious *margarine*. In cooking, however, the latter decomposes and imparts to the edible with which it is employed an objectionably rank flavour.

Of their eggs the Parisians need not be afraid. A paternal Administration watches for them. Follow me once more into the cellars—this time into those where the two and a half million eggs sold at the Halles in the course of the year are deposited in vast baskets holding a thousand each. In these dark vaults, so forcibly contrasting with the brightness above, men are busy examining, by the light of candles, the contents of the baskets strewn around them. In some cases each egg is minutely scrutinised, and all unfit for food are placed on one side. From the eggs to the poultry the transition is a natural one. To-day is Saturday, and so the display in Pavilion No 4 is remarkable; and though we have more to see, and must not loiter, yet a glance at this pavilion will not waste time. Note, for instance, the pigeon-stuffing, effected by men who, filling their mouths with tares and warm water, shoot the former down the birds' throats with amazing rapidity. In the autumn and winter the fatted pullet of Le Mans and the capon of La Bresse are relegated somewhat to the background; for then is the season for hares and venison, pheasants and partridges, quails and snipe. Germany supplies, I may mention, the Paris Halles with nearly as much game as does France itself; and two or three times a week, moreover, baskets made of strips of poplar wood bring woodcocks, grouse, capercailzie, ptarmigans, and specimens of the white partridge, or lagopus, from the banks of the Neva and the Dnieper.

Though our time is limited, yet ere we go we may as well look in at Pavilion No. 12, where remnants of cooked food, from the tables of ambassadors and ministers, aristocrats and financial *parvenus*, hotels and restaurants, are being daintily arranged so as to appear as inviting as possible. These are the famous *arlequins* to which every writer on the Halles has alluded since the days of poor Privat d'Anglemont. Arranged with care on clean white plates, these morsels of butcher's meat and poultry, flanked with vegetables, pastry, and sweetmeats, find numerous willing purchasers. Old ladies with pet dogs come here to purchase Médor's dinner, whilst misers and impoverished *rentiers* buy various 'lots' for personal consumption. Here also old bread-crumbs and crusts are offered for sale, either in the shape of triangular *croûtons*, for use with soup and vegetables, or else as the 'chippings' which Parisian butchers sprinkle over their meat. For flour you must go to the Halle aux Blés, a circular stone structure, west of the markets, and built on the site of an old palace of Catherine de Medici. Incrusted in its walls is a tower where Cosmo Ruggieri, the queen's astrologer, was wont to

consult the stars, and which Harrison Ainsworth has chosen for the scene of a striking incident in his novel 'Crichton.' There is but little animation at the Halle aux Blés, for the flour merchants and corn factors mostly transact their business in the surrounding cafés.

Five o'clock is approaching, and the daylight grows rapidly upon us. They are turning off the gas, five-and-twenty million cubic feet of which are consumed annually by the eleven and a half thousand burners that light the Halles. The 'strong men' have mustered and their roll-call has been read. In the vegetable pavilion, where the first transactions by public auction take place, the salesmen are already at their posts, with their *employés*, who are busy arranging their pens and papers. Out of the little offices installed in each pavilion come the verifiers of weights and measures preparing to go their rounds, together with the inspectors and their assistants, who will note down each object and price of sale at the coming public auctions. And here a word concerning the administration of the Halles, which is entirely in the hands of the Prefecture of Police. Thirty thousand persons find employment here and in the other Paris markets, and over all of them the Prefect exercises his authority. All the food inspectors and verifiers of weights and measures are under his control, and it is he who appoints the fifty-five titular salesmen, who serve as intermediaries between the producer and the retailer, their services being remunerated by a commission which ranges on the average from one to two and a half per cent. Naturally enough, the rent of the stalls, which goes partly to the city and partly to the support of the official staff, forms no inconsiderable amount at the close of the year; and a large sum is also derived from the tax on vehicles. Each night some 6,000 conveyances, drawn by more or less sturdy specimens of our noblest conquest, congregate around the Halles, in addition to countless trucks drawn or pushed by men and women; each vehicle paying to the municipality a tax varying from two to four pence, whilst on baskets and bundles of all descriptions an uniform rate of two sous, or a penny, is levied. Directly they are emptied the carts file off towards the Quays, the Corn Mart, the Boulevard Sebastopol, the Place du Châtelet, and the Hôtel de Ville, where they remain ranged in long lines until their drivers or owners have completed their business at the Halles, and are ready to jolt home again.

At five o'clock the markets open for business. The advanced guard of the army of buyers which will soon be here in its entirety—giving fresh animation to the already crowded scene—is already pouring in. There are restaurant and hotel keepers, bent either on

securing the very best of everything or on driving a good bargain, according as to whether their establishments are of a select or a popular character; *chefs* and *cordons bleus* from the grand mansions in the Faubourgs St.-Germain and St.-Honoré; nuns from the convents across the water; cooks both from hospitals and public and private colleges; with detachments of soldiers, officered by quarter-masters; and retail dealers innumerable. Hark! the clock is striking five. Two hours have elapsed since the markets opened for purposes of receiving and preparing food for sale. The pale moonlight which greeted our arrival is giving place to the early dawn, and the clock set in the façade of St.-Eustache is no longer illuminated, nor casts as heretofore, with its refulgent disk, a glimmering light over the sculptured tracery and quaint gargoyles. Beneath the time-piece still stalks some sentinel of the 'Poste de la Garde Republicaine,' whose little crib is ingeniously dovetailed into the back of the church; but he treats, somewhat naturally, with indifference a spectacle which has probably often presented itself to his view. He shows no interest either in the busy market scene around him, nor in the grand old church; a perfect jumble of perpendicular and florid Gothic, with patches of later Renaissance work visible here and there—a church notable, moreover, not merely for its striking architectural aspect, but by reason of a stirring souvenir. Within its walls one night in April, eight-and-eighty years ago, a solemn requiem was sung for the soul of one whose life was far from blameless, but whose memory is immortal. In stately pomp, when the low chant was over and the organ hushed, they bore his body by the light of torches through the adjacent markets and across the Seine, that it might rest in the Pantheon throughout the ages to come. But his ashes, like those of Rousseau and Voltaire, were doomed ere long to be dispersed; and, such is the irony of fate, on the spot where Mirabeau had slept, the sovereign people laid the bones of his reviler—Marat!

ERNEST A. VIZETELLY.

A Very Quiet Rubber.

BY JAMES PAYN.

IF the meditations of Mr. Gray had occurred to him in the churchyard of Tatbury, Berks, his 'Elegy' would have taken a different turn, or at least there would have been a supplementary verse or two not quite in accordance with its general tone. If he had had (as in my boyhood *I* had) the advantage of the acquaintance of Mr. John Newton of Tatbury, he would have obtained some new material, which, though not precisely poetic perhaps, might have been 'worked up' into some startling stanzas. Mr. Newton was the great 'auctioneer and upholder' of those parts, but incidentally an undertaker also, and knew a great deal more about churchyards than Mr. Gray did. He knew, at all events, all those within thirty miles of him, and most of those who had been in the occupation of them for fifty years. It could hardly have been said of a Berkshire gentleman of any position, during that period, that he was 'happy,' unless Mr. John Newton had conducted his obsequies; it was like 'having no burial' at all.

When even the Marquis of Berks was gathered to his forefathers, no London firm was employed to place him in the family vault at Tatbury; Mr. Newton was felt (by the executors) to be equal to the emergency. In the Marquis's will, it was known beforehand that he had expressed a wish that his hearse should be drawn by his own carriage horses, and Mr. Newton had the foresight (when his lordship was given over by Dr. Frump of Tatbury, whose word was Law and Physic in one) to have them exercised every day in plumes, lest they should be restive under them on the stately occasion for which their services were required.

Of course there were people, even in Tatbury, so lost to all sense of authority and solemnity as to make light of Mr. John Newton. At the Town Club, for example, which was held at the Berkshire Arms, and where he was accustomed to play whist, on one occasion—it was under the Regency—when he had won three bumpers running, a loser had sarcastically observed to him, 'Why, this is better, old man, than burying the Prince Regent;' but the observation had fallen flat, as being profane when addressed to a man of his grave position, as well as slightly flippant with respect to a leading member of the Royal Family. Yet, if Mr. Newton could ever be said to unbend

himself at all, it was at Long Whist; when his manner of saying 'Hush!' and 'We are playing at whist, if you please,' was justly pronounced to be perfect in its gentlemanly bearing. The way in which he would set down his cards (with their faces downwards, you may be certain, for there were sharp players in the Town Club), and fold his hands till conversation should cease, was something that the Lord Chancellor of England, or the Speaker of the House of Commons, might have copied with advantage, as a lesson in the dignity of reproach.

If a man so well established and respected as Mr. Newton of Tatbury could be said to have an ambition unsatisfied, it was that his scientific genius as a whist-player was confined to the Town Club, and forbidden to exercise itself in private circles. But trade, even in its quietest and gravest form, which surely can be said of undertaking, was tabooed among the gentry of Tatbury; their incomes were microscopic, but they made up for that by being exclusive and select. Even the local banker was only admitted into their society on sufferance, and it was thought a piece of impertinence in him (as it was certainly one of superfluity) to win at whist.

There was one especial clique, consisting of two ladies and two gentlemen, who played the game with rigour every lawful night of their lives, to which Mr. Newton particularly aspired, but in vain. Mr. Ashton and Mr. Groves, Miss Lake and Miss Sutton, were the names of this little *coterie*, who had been partners and opponents for nearly one quarter of their natural lives. Their points were but three pennies, but their science was great; if they made mistakes in play, they acknowledged them, and away from the card-table they made none. Their lives were blameless; they were looked up to by all their neighbours; it was said they gave all they won to the poor, and I can well believe it. If they did so, that largess would not have been so great as to have demoralised Tatbury.

Mr. John Newton had made various efforts to enter this little paradise, but he remained outside. Like the Peri in the poem, he could have brought many a tear gathered in the course of his professional experience (from mourners, if not from penitents), but it would have availed him nothing. They knew he was quiet in his manners, an excellent whist-player, and would have given them first-rate suppers when his turn to invite them came round—for they played alternately at each other's houses—but their doors were closed against him. They refused to be connected, however unofficially, with a person who sold by retail, even though it was but coffins to the great. On the other hand, they very eagerly welcomed the information he had to give them concerning the demise

of eminent persons in the neighbourhood, and admitted him to a certain degree of familiarity. He knew, from each one's account of the others, all their different styles of play, and which was the favourite partner of each. The temptation that beset Mr. Ashton, when his hand was full of trumps (otherwise he would have scorned it) was to lead a single card; Mr. Groves played too much for his own hand; Miss Lake would lead trumps on too slight a provocation; and Miss Sutton, an admirable performer in other respects, was given to finesses that made one's blood curdle.

Mr. Newton felt that he had none of these weaknesses, and was worthy to be the partner of any one of the four. But though envious of them, he was not malicious. It was from his lips that I first heard of their virtues; he had come professionally to 'measure' my grandfather, and over a glass of dry sherry discoursed to the housekeeper in my presence concerning them in a manner which, to my childish ears, considering the solemnity of the occasion, sounded somewhat secular. In later days I was better able to grasp Mr. Newton's character (which was anything but profane), and to appreciate his observations upon human nature. His lecture-room was most commonly the graveyard itself, which, being contiguous to our own house, afforded me many opportunities of conversing with him, when on the eve of any great engagement he came, like a prudent general, to survey the ground and make his dispositions beforehand—in advance of the sexton.

After many years' absence from the home of my fathers, I returned to Tatbury the other day, and found my friend of the scarf and hat-band still above ground and busy as usual. His was a trade, as I ventured to observe to him, that never fails, and which such bad times as these even promote by occasional suicides.

He shook his head. 'Folks die, Master James, of course,' he said; 'there is no falling off *there*.' He was about to add, 'thank Heaven;' but perceiving with fine tact that the ejaculation was too professional, and might have been misunderstood, he effected the following substitution: 'but when they die, they are not buried as they used to be.'

'Dear me!' said I: 'has cremation made such strides, then?'

He smiled contemptuously. 'In a Christian land, sir, that will never succeed. What sort of a future can be looked for as begins, so to speak, with burning? The parson says, "Ashes to ashes," it is true, but that is quite another thing from cremation. Folks know they will be reduced to dust, but they don't see the operation, and therefore do not realise it; if they did, it would be harder for them to imagine their friends saints and angels; and therefore they don't want to see it.'

‘There’s something in that,’ I assented, ‘no doubt.’

Mr. Newton smiled benignly, as though he would have said, ‘There is generally “something” in what I say, if you will only favour me with your attention;’ then added reflectively, ‘Why, there was old Lady Braddon the other day, she wouldn’t be put into the family vault, nor yet into a brick grave, because, said she, “How am I to get out again?” She was the best of Christians, but in that respect she had material views. And here she lies’—we were standing in the churchyard—‘among the mere common people accordingly.’

‘It must be rather sad for you to have to come here so often,’ said I, ‘and on such melancholy errands.’

I felt the observation was a foolish one directly it had passed my lips; but it is one thing to know what is commonplace, and another to know how to avoid it.

‘Melancholy!’ he exclaimed, ‘not a bit of it. The great majority of my friends lie here, and I have no disinclination to join them. You see that square green grave, with the four stones about it; there lie the best people I ever knew in Tatbury, and the best whist-players; two of them bachelors, two of them spinsters; Mr. Ashton and Miss Lake, Mr. Groves and Miss Sutton. There they lie, opposite to one another, just as they sat in life; you remember them, Master James, of course?’

‘I remember who they were,’ I said. ‘I was but a boy in their time. You used to tell me about them.’

‘Ay, I dare say. When Mr. Ashton went, I had some hopes of filling his place; but they preferred dummy. The three met together every night for years, with that vacant seat at the old table; it was a very touching spectacle. None of them would ever lead a single card after they had lost him, no matter how desperate their condition; it was felt to be irreverent, and, so to speak, an infringement of copyright. It was what the American publishers (with whom, however, I wouldn’t compare them for a moment) I see call “the courtesy of the trade.” *There* was delicacy of feeling, and no mistake. Mr. Groves was the next to go, when the two old ladies were reduced to double dummy. Miss Lake used to say, “We can’t help playing for our own hands *now*, dear, can we, as poor Mr. Groves used to do?” They were obliged to infringe *his* copyright from necessity. A man as couldn’t drop a tear to see those two ladies without partners, evening after evening, wasn’t worthy to be called a man. And in my opinion it hastened their end: double dummy is a great strain upon the mind, Master James.’

The undertaker was so moved, that if he had seen the same

demonstrativeness in one of his own mutes, he would, have given him a shilling; it was always a principle with him to encourage emotion.

‘Then Miss Lake, she was the third to go. A good woman, if ever there was one. The poor lost a friend in her, and the church a constant attendant. She never touched a card after twelve o’clock on Saturday nights, though only a few people knew what it cost her to resist the temptation. There’s been a note of it kept in the proper place, I’ve not a doubt.’

Here the undertaker gave a sigh so significant that I could not for the life of me help observing, ‘There are few whist-players can say as much, Mr. Newton.’

‘No, you are wrong there, Master James; leastways, if you think as conscience is a-pricking *me*, I have never played into Sunday morning, though it is true I have sat up till after twelve on Sunday nights and begun *then*. Well, when Miss Lake went, Miss Sutton was left alone; the last leaf, as one might say, of that green table. There was nothing for her, poor soul, but patience; and she played Patience accordingly every night. When her turn came, as she expressed it, “to cut out,” she sent for me. It was only a few hours before her demise, and she had already seen the clergyman. “Mr. Newton,” said she, “I know you wanted to join our little party years ago, but it was not to be. Still, I feel you had a kindness for us. There are some good people in the world who make objections to our innocent game. I hope they may have nothing worse upon their own consciences to answer for than having played a quiet rubber. But I don’t want to be a stumbling-block. You need not therefore make public what I am about to ask you—at least, not until I am forgotten, which won’t be long. Mr. Ashton and Mr. Groves lie at right angles to one another, as you well know, and dear Miss Lake opposite to Mr. Ashton; bury me opposite to Mr. Groves, so that I shall make up the old party!”

‘I assure you, Master James, she said it so pitiful that I couldn’t answer her for tears. I only nodded my head and looked mournful, like one of my own hearse horses.

‘Then she added, “And if you don’t think it would be wrong Mr. Newton, I should like the two packs of cards we last played with—we always used to make them last three months, you know—put into my coffin. Would you mind seeing to that yourself?”

‘Of course I said it should be done, and it *was* done with my own hands. There are some folks as would think it irreverent, though I have known the same people drop a toy into a child’s coffin, with tears ready to break their hearts; yet, what are cards

ut toys, and we but children? Well, I buried the poor old lady
ust as she wished, and there they lie, all four of 'em.'

We were standing by the place he indicated, and I noticed
that the one green grave which contained the whole party had
been somewhat flattened at the top.

'That was your doing also, I suppose?' I inquired.

'Yes. No one has observed it but yourself; but I thought if I
made it tabular it would look more like the real thing. It is a
very quiet rubber!'

The Old Dublin Stage.

CHETWOOD, in his 'General History of the Stage,' says that 'the kingdom of Ireland was one of the last in Europe where established theatres were erected.' Plays were acted at Dublin Castle as early as Queen Elizabeth's time, for it is recorded that Sackville's 'Gorboduc,' the first English tragedy, was performed there on her Majesty's birthday, 1601; but there does not appear to have been any building devoted to dramatic performances until 1635, when the then Lord-Lieutenant, the Earl of Strafford, who had raised the city from a mere collection of mud huts to a flourishing capital, caused a theatre to be erected in Warburg Street. The companies who performed there were probably brought over from London, where Puritanism was already decreasing the number of the theatres, but the names of the actors who first crossed the Channel have not descended to posterity. The first era of the Irish stage was a short one, for its suppression followed close upon that of the English.

In 1661 a new theatre was built, by subscription of the gentry, in Orange Street, or Smock Alley as it was usually called. It must have been a handsome erection, as it cost 2,000*l.*, a considerable sum in those days; but it was so badly built, that in 1671 a part of it fell down, and two persons were killed and several others much injured.

The manager was one Joseph Asbury, who had served in the army under the Duke of Ormond, and had been one of the officers who seized Dublin Castle, made prisoner the parliamentarian governor, and held it for King Charles. For this service, among other rewards, he was made Deputy Master of the Revels, and in 1682, Master. Like Mohun and several other Cavaliers, he, after the Restoration, turned his attention to the stage, and became an admirable actor in the leading parts of tragedy and comedy. The amalgamation of the Lincoln's Inn Fields company with that of Drury Lane in 1691-2, having thrown several London actors of talent out of engagements, a few of them joined Asbury's company, and in a Dublin playbill of this year we find the names of Wilks, Booth Norris, the famous 'Jubilee Dicky' of 'The Constant Couple,' Bowen, and Estcourt, Steele's friend immortalised in the 'Tatler.'

Wilks, the original Sir Harry Wildair, was an Irishman, and made his first appearance upon the Smock Alley stage; and so much was he esteemed there, that when Rich, the Lincoln's Inn Fields manager, tempted him to cross the Channel, Asbury procured

an order from the Lord-Lieutenant to prevent him leaving the country; but the actor contrived to get away before it could be put in force. He had not been long in London, when he was one day surprised to see one of his old Dublin *confères*, dressed in a very extraordinary manner, staring up at the clock in Covent Garden. It was 'honest Joe Trefusis,' a famous comedian, the original Trapland in Congreve's 'Love for Love.' The account he gave of his sudden appearance in the English metropolis was whimsical enough. One morning, while fishing in the Liffey, he had been hailed by two friends who were going down in a boat to embark for England. They asked Joe to step in and see them safe on board. Giving his rod to a friend to take care of, he complied. When they got him on the deck of the ship, they found little difficulty in inducing him to take the voyage with them. So, in his fishing costume, and with only seven shillings in his pocket, Joe was landed at the London Docks, and at once made his way to the neighbourhood of the theatres. 'Why, what dost here, Joe?' was Wilks's first inquiry. 'Why, faith, Bobby,' replied the erratic comedian, 'I only came to see what time it was in Covent Garden.' Wilks gave him money and clothes, and sent him back to finish the engagement he had interrupted in so extraordinary a manner.

The great Barton Booth made his first appearance upon the Dublin stage in 1698 (in the character of Oronooko), and, like Wilks, received his first instructions in the art from Asbury. Dick Estcourt also acquired his first fame from the appreciation of an Irish audience.

It must have surely been the direct ancestors of our present race of builders who erected the Dublin theatres, for in 1701 there was another tumble; the galleries gave way, and many people were injured. It was during the performance of Shadwell's 'Libertine' (a version of Molière's 'Don Juan'). The superstitious audience held that it was a judgment upon them for being present at the performance of such a play, and several ever after protested that just before the accident the candles burned blue, and a most extraordinary dancer, with cloven feet, appeared upon the stage. The piece was not again acted for twenty years.

After that notable migration in 1691 it became quite an established thing for the most famous London players to visit the sister kingdom; and many who afterwards became the chief ornaments of Drury Lane and Covent Garden were of Irish birth, and won their first laurels upon the Dublin stage. Asbury lived into the reign of George I., and died in his eighty-second year, having held the management of the theatre under five monarchs. His successor was his son-in-law, Tom Elrington. If power of lung has

anything to do with good acting, Elrington must have been supremely good. In after years, when he had passed away, and Barry and Mossop had taken his place in public favour, an admirer of Tom's, while one day comparing him with his successors, clinched the argument by exclaiming: 'Why, in a passionate scene you could hear Elrington's voice beyond the blind quay; and I don't believe you could hear Mossop's outside the building!' Colley Cibber blames his disposition to rant, but he must have possessed some extraordinary powers, since we are told that one night, while acting the mad scene of Orestes, he produced so terrible an effect upon one of the musicians in the orchestra, that the man actually became insane. In his youth he was apprenticed to a French upholsterer, but from the first the stage marked him for its own. He and Chetwood, then about his own age, used secretly to perform in private theatricals. One day the latter brought him a play-book to the shop: it was Lee's 'Sophonisba,' in which he was to play Masinissa. 'I found him,' says Chetwood, 'finishing a velvet cushion, and gave him the book; but, alas! before he could secrete it, his master, a hot voluble Frenchman, came in upon us, and the book was thrust beneath the velvet of the cushion. His master, as usual, rated him for not working, with a "Morbleu! why are you not vark, Tom?" and stood over him so long that I saw, with some mortification, the book irrecoverably stitched up in the cushion, never to be retrieved till the cushion is worn to pieces. Poor Tom cast many a desponding look upon me when he was finishing the fate of the play, while every stitch went to both our hearts.'

Another time this stage-struck youth attempted the Ghost in 'Hamlet.' Attired in a suit of pasteboard armour, he stalked on in the first scene, when to his horror he saw his master, who had got intelligence of what was going on, seated in front. The first and second scenes, however, passed, and the Frenchman only muttered between his teeth, and the trembling youth hoped that his passion would subside. But when the Ghost began his speech, 'Mark me!' up jumped the irate foreigner, and crying, 'Begar, me vil mark you presently!' beat the poor Ghost off the stage into the street. But some of the audience, who were not to be defrauded of their amusement, rushed after them, and rescuing the apparition from his infuriated pursuer, brought him back in triumph. The Frenchman, however, was as tenacious as they, and following up his apprentice, would not cease his clamour until Tom had promised that he would never act any more. Elrington made his first appearance upon the regular stage at Drury Lane in 1709, as Oronooko, and had he remained in London might have proved

a formidable rival to Barton Booth, for Young declared that he had never had the part of Zanga, in his play of 'The Revenge,' performed so finely as by him. Colley Cibber; however, did not like him and would not advance him, so he went over to Dublin, where he at once became a great favourite, and married one of Asbury's daughters. When invited to return to London, he said: 'In Ireland I am so well rewarded for my services that I cannot think of leaving it for any consideration. There is not a gentleman's house in that kingdom to which I am not a welcome guest.'

The disaffection which pervaded all ranks of society, however, at this period, rendered the position of an English actor, as indeed it did of all Englishmen, somewhat precarious in Irish society, as the following anecdote will testify. A performer of some celebrity named Evans, while dining with a party of Irish officers one evening at Cork, gave the health of her Majesty Queen Anne; upon which one of the company, although he wore the Queen's uniform, rose in disgust, went downstairs, and sent up a challenge to Evans by one of the servants. The message, being whispered in his ear, was not heard by the rest. Without a word, Evans took up his sword and left the room. He found his challenger in an apartment below. Before he could guard himself, the other made a thrust at him. Parrying the blow with his hand, he drew upon his antagonist, drove him out into the passage, disarmed him, and then returned to the company. All pretended to be highly disgusted at the conduct of their companion; but when Evans returned to Dublin, these same people raised such a clique against him that his appearance upon the stage was the signal for a riot. The audience was dismissed, and no play was allowed to be performed until he asked pardon. 'Kneel down, you rascal!' cried out a ruffian from the pit. 'No, you rascal; I'll kneel to none but God and my Queen!' replied the actor spiritedly.

Smock Alley continued to be the only theatre in Dublin until 1731, when one Madame Violante, a female acrobat, opened a booth in George's Lane, at first only for rope-dancing, but afterwards for dramatic entertainments. It was here the famous Peg Woffington made her first appearance, as a child. Her father was a bricklayer, her mother a washerwoman, and she used to cry salads through the streets. But the ragged little barefooted urchin's beautiful face and splendid eyes caught the attention of Madame Violante, who found no difficulty in persuading her to exchange rags and starvation for tinsel and plenty. A company of children was trained to play 'The Beggar's Opera,' and Peggy, then twelve years of age, performed Polly so well and acted so charmingly, that she drew crowds to the booth to see her. A year

afterwards Elrington engaged her for the Theatre Royal, where her success was equally great. There she remained until she was twenty-two, when she came over to England. But after she had become the great London favourite, she paid frequent visits to Ireland. So highly were her wit and social talents esteemed, that she was for one year elected president of the famous Beef-steak Club attached to the theatre, the members of which were chiefly lords and gentlemen of high position, and to which no female nor any actor had ever been before admitted. One season she was paid as much as eight hundred pounds for her services.

The year after Madame Violante opened her booth, it was suppressed at the instigation of the manager of the Theatre Royal. But immediately afterwards a new house was erected in Ransford Street, for which the Earl of Meath obtained a patent. In 1734 a third theatre was erected, by a voluntary subscription of the nobility and gentry, in Aungier Street. The foundation-stones were laid with great pomp and ceremony, the first by the Lord-Lieutenant, the Duke of Dorset, and three others by persons high in office. As each was set there was a flourish of trumpets and drums and shouts and acclamations from the immense concourse of people who assembled to witness the ceremony. Barrels of ale were set flowing for the mob, a splendid dinner and the choicest wines were provided for the gentry. This theatre was to be the wonder of the age, it was to revive the glories of the Athenian drama. The proprietors, a committee of noblemen and gentlemen, met every Saturday to select and cast the plays and regulate the business. But, alas! all these bright visions were doomed to disappointment; for, whether there were too many cooks, or whether they found amateur management was not such a pretty plaything as they imagined, the whole thing proved a dead failure. In 1735, Smock Alley, which had fallen into decay, was rebuilt. But for several years the dramatic art had been in a state of decay in Dublin, both on account of the falling off in histrionic talent and because of a decrease of public patronage. Salaries were small, ranging from a guinea to eight shillings, and even these miserable pittance were not paid. There is a story told of the hungry company at Smock Alley waiting one night for the money to come in to get a dinner, before the play commenced. The first shilling taken was expended in a loin of mutton, the second in bread, the third in beer. The following copy of a curious old playbill of this period will show the style of entertainment then in vogue in the Dublin theatres:—

For the benefit of Mrs. Bullock's Daughter.

By the Right Honourable Lord Mayor's Company of Comedians.

By particular desire,

At the Theatre in Smock Alley,

On Friday, the 10th of February, will be acted a Comedy called

'Love for Love.'

The part of *Miss Prue* to be performed by Mrs. Bullock's Daughter.

All the other parts to the best advantage.

With a new PROLOGUE to be spoken by HER.

With the following entertainments between the acts:—

Act 1. The Song of Mad Tom, by Mr. Hind.

Act 2. The Sailor's Dance, by Mons. Dumont and Mrs. Martin.

Act 3. A new Dialogue, to be sung between Mr. Este and Mrs. Reynolds.

Act 4. The Scotch Dance, by Mr. Morris and Mrs. Martin.

Act 5. A new Pantomime Dance, called

'Pygmalion and the Ivory Statue.'

The Statue of the Ivory Maid, by Mrs. Bullock's Daughter.

Boxes, 5s. 5d.; Lattices, 4s. 4d.; Pit, 3s. 3d.; Gallery, 2s. 2d.

To begin exactly at half an hour after six o'clock.

Vivat Rex.

In 1744 a new and flourishing era began in Dublin theatrical annals, when Thomas Sheridan, uniting the two companies of Aungier Street and Smock Alley at the latter house, became sole manager. Sheridan was the son of Swift's friend the Doctor, and the father of Brinsley. He had some talent as a tragedian, although his style was stilted and ponderous, and in London he could not hold his ground against two such consummate artistes as Garrick and Barry. Under his direction, however, at Dublin, the drama once more rose from the utter contempt into which it had fallen, to honour and respect, and for twelve years no performer ever went unpaid. But he had a hard battle to fight against the licentious and overbearing audience of that time, who were ready to break out into riots at the least provocation. A most crying evil was the admission behind the scenes of every idler who wore a laced coat. The college youths would crowd to every rehearsal, and Victor says that he has seen actors and actresses rehearsing within a circle of fifty or sixty of these, whose manners and bearing were a constant menace to decorum and decency. A few anecdotes gleaned from Victor's 'History of the Stage' will give a vivid picture of the Dublin audience of his day.

One night, in 1746, a half-intoxicated fellow named Kelly climbed over the orchestra on to the stage, made his way to the green-room, and so grossly insulted the actresses who were sitting

there, that they were obliged to fly to their dressing-rooms. Sheridan very temperately ordered some of the servants to conduct him back to the pit. Kelly showed his appreciation of this forbearance by hurling an orange at him the moment he entered upon the stage. Sheridan stopped the performance and addressed the audience: there was an altercation, and the curtain was dropped. Thereupon Kelly rushed round to Sheridan's dressing-room and demanded satisfaction, which he received in full from an oaken cudgel. Like all bullies, the fellow was an arrant coward, and throwing himself upon the ground, cried and writhed, but vowed he would make him 'repent this usage to a gentleman.' He found no difficulty in forming a clique among his companions, and the next night about fifty of these choice spirits leaped upon the stage with drawn swords, bent upon taking Sheridan's life; but the manager had received warning of their intentions during the day, and was not to be found, although they searched the theatre from floor to ceiling, wanton destruction of property marking every step of their course. But, as may be conjectured, the matter did not end here. Night after night the rioters interrupted the performance; an opposition party was formed, who sided with the manager; the dispute, which was not confined to words, but often went to blows, was carried on outside as well as inside the theatre, until the magistrates considered it prudent to order a suspension of the performances. The law was then appealed to by both parties. Kelly's faction boasted that no jury could be found in Ireland who would dare to convict *a gentleman!* But for the honour of the country a jury and a judge were found who did convict this 'gentleman,' and condemned him to three months' imprisonment and to pay a fine of 300*l.*; while at the same time Sheridan established the invaluable right of denying admission behind the curtain, and never again, according to Victor, during his management was any stranger permitted to infringe that right. He had long struggled against this obnoxious privilege; he had printed notices in the public papers, and given orders at the doors that no gentleman on any pretext was to be permitted to pass behind the scenes; he had even placed a sentry at the stage entrance; but by bribing or violence these orders were continually evaded. One night an officer, upon being told by the sentry that he could not pass, drew his sword and stabbed the poor fellow in the thigh with so much violence that the weapon broke in the wound and occasioned the loss of the limb.

A few years later, a yet more serious riot brought about Sheridan's retirement from the management. The Beef-steak Club, before mentioned, was partly a political one, being entirely

restricted to members of the Court party ; and as Sheridan was at the head of it, he was extremely unpopular among the patriots, as the opposition styled themselves, who vowed his destruction at the first opportunity that presented itself. It was afforded by the translation of Voltaire's 'Mahomet,' which was produced in 1753.

In one of the scenes of this play occurs the following speech :—

If, ye powers divine !
Ye mark the movements of the nether world,
And bring them to account ! crush, crush those vipers,
Who, singled out by the community
To guard their rights, shall, for a grasp of ore
Or paltry office, sell them to the foe.

These lines were considered to be so appropriate a hit against the Court party, that a body of patriots assembled in the pit vociferously demanded an encore,—a request with which West Digges, by whom they were delivered, had the bad taste to comply. At rehearsal the next morning Sheridan severely rebuked him, alleging, and justly, that he had brought disgrace upon himself and all the company by thus prostituting himself to the wanton humours of the audience. Yet at the same time he left it to his own discretion whether or not he should repeat the offence. The next night 'Mahomet' was performed the house was crowded ; as before, the speech was received with tremendous cheers, and its repetition vociferously called for. As soon as he could make himself heard, Digges came forward and said that, although it would give him the highest pleasure to comply with the request, he begged to be excused, as his compliance would be greatly injurious to him. Immediately there was a roar of 'Sheridan ! The Manager !' Sheridan refused to obey the call, and sent on the prompter to inform the audience that, if they were not disposed to allow the performance to proceed, their money would be returned them at the doors ; but not a word of his speech was heard. In vain did their favourite Woffington attempt to proceed with the play : the uproar increased every moment. Digges alone, the hero of the hour, was able to obtain a hearing. Amidst a profound silence he assured the house that Mr. Sheridan had not laid any injunction upon him in regard to the speech, and therefore, he argued, had not incurred their displeasure. He further stated that it was useless to continue the call for him, as he had gone home. Upon that announcement the clamour recommenced, with cries of 'Let him be sent for, we will wait an hour.' Messengers were despatched post-haste to the manager's house, but he positively refused to return. For the stipulated time the audience remained

perfectly orderly, but at the expiration of the hour the cry for Sheridan was fiercely renewed. Suddenly a youth started up in the pit and shouted, 'God bless his Majesty King George. Hurra!' The shout was taken up and repeated three times; then the havoc commenced. In five minutes the auditorium was in ruins and the rioters were upon the stage, with drawn swords slashing the curtain and all the scenery within their reach. Then returning to the front of the house, they dragged out the grate of the box-room, which was full of burning coals, and cast the *débris* of doors and mouldings upon it for the purpose of setting fire to the building. Fortunately, however, these were removed in time to prevent such a catastrophe.

After such an *émeute*, which, as we have seen, was really a demonstration against his political principles, it would have been useless for Sheridan to have re-opened the theatre. He accordingly let it to Victor, his acting manager, who, in conjunction with an actor named Sowdon, now took the managerial reins. About six weeks after they commenced their season, a demand was made for the performance of the fatal 'Mahomet.' Instead, however, of the crowded house they tremblingly expected, it was not half full; the famous speech, now spoken by an inferior actor, was encored as usual, but no disturbance ensued; and the next time the tragedy was performed, as only eight or ten 'patriots' formed the entire assembly, the audience was dismissed and the house closed.

The new managers were so unsuccessful in their speculation, although they engaged Barry, Woffington, and all the available talent they could gather, that Sheridan was recalled in 1756 to resume the direction. But the lapse of time had not softened the bitterness of faction. On the first night of the season there was a call for him to appear and apologise. He was ill at the time, and unable to leave his room, but the clamourers would not be satisfied until a message was brought from him to the effect that as soon as he was sufficiently recovered he would make a public apology upon the stage, of which due notice should be given in the bills. And to this bitter humiliation he was compelled to submit, nearly three years after the supposed offence had been committed.

And there were new troubles in store for him. In 1758 Woodward, the famous Drury Lane harlequin and comedian, with Spranger Barry, decided upon building a new theatre in Crow Street. 'Silver-tongued Barry,' Garrick's only peer in tragedy, was a Dublin man and an immense favourite in that city, and upon the new house opening, the rivalry between the two managements was carried on with the keenest acrimony. The play-going public, including the whole fashionable world, was divided into

two factions, at the head of which were, to use the old phrase, several ladies of quality, who bespoke plays on certain nights, and worked as eagerly to obtain a full house as though they were to reap the profits of it. Victor gives us an amusing picture of one of these events in the following passage:—

‘The great lady of the night goes early into the box-room¹ to receive her company. This lady had sent out pit and gallery tickets to all her tradespeople, with threatenings of the loss of her custom if they did not dispose of them; and the concern she was under when the time was approaching for the drawing up of the curtain, at the sight of a thin pit and galleries, introduced the following entertainment. The lady was ready to faint, and after smelling-bottles were applied, she cried out “she was ruined, undone! She would never be able to look dear Mr. B—— in the face any more after such a shocking disappointment.” After many of these repeated lamentations, the box-keeper advanced and said, “I beg your ladyship will not be so disheartened; indeed, your ladyship’s pit will mend, and your ladyship’s galleries, too, will certainly mend, before the play begins.” At which the lady cried out: “But, you nasty flattering fellow! I tell you I am undone! ruined! undone! that’s all. But I’ll be revenged. I am resolved I’ll pay off—no—I’ll turn off, all my saucy tradesmen to-morrow morning.”’

But Barry’s handsome person and fine genius, together with the novelty of a new theatre, made heavy odds against the Smock Alley manager. And in addition to these, Fortune threw her weight into the scales. Sheridan had arranged for the production of one of the Sadler’s Wells pantomimes, from which he hoped great things; but the ship which was bringing over the harlequin, the music, and the plot, was wrecked. Theophilus Cibber likewise, who had been engaged to strengthen the company, went down in the same ill-fated vessel. Then one or two of his best actors went over to the opposition house, and Macklin, upon whose appearance he reckoned largely, disappointed him. Unable to retrieve his losses, he was compelled at the beginning of 1759 to again retire from the management.

Crow Street, however, was not long left in undisputed monopoly of things theatrical. In 1760, Mossop, another actor of Irish birth, who had already won his laurels upon both the London and Dublin stages, opened Smock Alley, and the contest between the two houses was carried on with more vigour than ever. Once more the ladies of quality ranged themselves upon opposite sides, and as both the managers were young and handsome, the factions

¹ While the London theatres had only a lobby, the Dublin houses had an elegantly appointed room for the box audience to retire to between the acts of the play.

were pretty equal. Both strained every nerve, and lavished money at a rate that, according to the public support given to the Dublin theatres, was ruinous. The expenses of Crow Street amounted to 371*l.* weekly, and between the two houses about 200 persons were employed. Each strove to be first in the field with any London success. Murphy's 'Orphan of China' had just made a great hit, and both theatres announced its production. But while Barry announced that all the dresses would be brought direct from China, Mossop gave a patriotic touch in his bills by stating that the 'characters will be dressed in the manufactures of this kingdom;' and by working night and day he contrived to produce it first. A grand spectacular revival of 'Coriolanus,' by Mossop, brought forth an equally splendid production of Lee's 'Alexander the Great' at Crow Street. As a specimen of the style of mounting plays at this period, I subjoin O'Keefe's description of the Macedonian Conqueror's triumphal entry into Babylon:—

'Alexander's high and beautiful chariot was first seen at the farther end of the stage (the theatre stretching from Fownes Street to Simple Lane). He (Barry) seated in it was drawn to the front, to triumphant music, by the unarmed soldiery. When arrived at its station, to stop for him to alight, before he had time even to speak, the machinery was settled on such a simple yet certain plan, that the chariot in a twinkling disappeared, and every soldier was at the instant armed. It was thus managed. Each man, having his particular duty assigned to him, laid his hand on different parts of the chariot. One took a wheel, and held it up on high—this was a shield; then others took the remaining wheels, and all in a moment wore shields upon their left arms; the axle-tree was taken by another—it was a spear; the body of the chariot also took to pieces, and the whole was converted into swords, javelins, lances, standards, &c. Each soldier, thus armed, arranged himself at the sides of the stage, and Alexander in the centre began his speech.'

By-and-by quarrels arose between Barry and his partner. The tragedian grumbled at the amount of money spent upon pantomimes; Woodward complained of the extravagant sums lavished upon tragedies. The result was a dissolution of partnership. Barry struggled for a time, but was obliged to succumb at last, and leave Mossop in undisputed possession of the field. But the conqueror could not escape the doom of all his predecessors—ruin. This time, however, Fortune was less to blame than the man. Admitted to the highest society of Dublin—and it was the wildest, most extravagant, spendthrift society that the world ever saw—the pet of noble ladies, the Countess of Brandon and Lady Rachael Mac-

donald, addicted to gambling and every other aristocratic pleasure, the profits of the most successful theatre would have been inadequate to supply him with means. His actors were unpaid, and debts on all sides overwhelmed him. But the imperial potentate of some stilted eighteenth-century tragedy was never more pompous and arrogant amidst all his troubles than was Mossop. His starving actors, who desperately appealed to him for the means of buying food, were commanded to leave his presence with all the arrogance of a stage tyrant, and his ordinary diction was based upon the same model. When he was an actor under Sheridan he had been told that the manager had made some disparaging remarks upon his dressing Richard III. in white satin. Stalking up to his chief, with the pomposity of a ruffled peacock, he addressed him thus: 'Mr. Sher-i-dan, I hear you said I dressed Richard like a cox-comb. This is an af-front. You wear a sword; pull it out of the scab-bard. I'll draw mine, and thrust it into your bo-dy, sir.' He was not quite such a fire-eater, however, as this speech would indicate, for once when he threatened to kill the famous mimic, Tate Wilkinson, if he should dare to imitate him, Tate quietly accepted the challenge, which somewhat cooled the wrath of this Bobadil. 'Sir,' he said, 'you dare not take me off; or if you do, dare not take me off more than a lit-tle. If you do more, sir, you shall die!' Mossop's fate was a most pitiable one. After Barry's failure, in 1767, he became manager of both theatres. In 1770 a new playhouse was opened by one Dawson, in Capel Street, and two years afterwards Mossop quitted Dublin a ruined man. He went back to London, but—too proud to solicit an engagement, and reduced to the lowest depths of destitution—he shut himself up in the garret he inhabited at Chelsea, and, refusing to accept any nourishment, perished of starvation.

A famous Dublin actor named Ryder succeeded to the sceptre of Smock Alley, and in 1776 became manager of both houses; a monopoly which turned out as unfortunate for him as it had for his predecessors, for in 1787 we find Daly, a gentleman by birth, but a notorious *roué*, manager of Smock Alley, while Barry's widow, now Mrs. Crawford, directed at Crow Street. With an excellent company, which numbered John Kemble amongst its members, and a superior style of management, the elder house carried the sway, and Mrs. Crawford was after a while glad to transfer her interest in the theatre to her rival, but not before her husband had been reduced to the most disgraceful shifts of impecuniosity. It was the old story of unpaid actors, strikes, and desertions. The only person who was regularly paid was Mrs. Crawford herself, who, set down for a salary, would refuse to go on the stage before she

received it. One night the musicians struck, and Crawford, dressed for Hamlet, had to go before the curtain and fiddle a jig for the overture. On another occasion, from a similar cause, he had to whistle to his own dancing.

Sir Jonah Barrington, in his 'Recollections,' gives us a vivid picture of the theatres at this period. 'The playhouses in Dublin,' he says, 'were lighted with tallow candles stuck in two circles, hanging from the middle of the stage, which were every now and then snuffed by some performer; and two soldiers, with fixed bayonets, always stood on each side the stage, close to the boxes, to keep the audience in order. The galleries were very noisy and very droll. The ladies and gentlemen in the boxes always went dressed out as if for Court—the strictest etiquette and decorum were preserved in that circle; whilst the pit, as being full of critics and wise men, was particularly respected, except when the young gentlemen of the University occasionally forced themselves in to revenge some insult, real or imaginary, to a member of their body, on which occasion all the ladies, well-dressed men, and peaceable people decamped forthwith, and the young gentlemen as generally proceeded to beat or turn out the residue of the audience, and to break everything that came within their reach. So riotous, however, was the pit audience, that no female ever sat in that part of the house.'

The authority just quoted, Sir Jonah Barrington, tells a story of an amusing bit of realism which it was customary to introduce into 'Hamlet.' Horatio describes the Ghost disappearing at cock-crow. In England we have always been content to imagine the notes of Chanticleer; not so in Dublin. There an actor was regularly cast for the part, and his performance was as rigidly criticised by the gallery as that of any other actor. In Sir Jonah's time there was one who had acquired quite a fame in the part. But this was not all; five or six real roosters were brought behind the scenes, and so natural was his imitation, that all would take up the note after him, and the spectre of the Danish king would vanish amidst a full chorus.

It was customary for stage-struck youths and demoiselles to come over from England to make first appearances upon the Dublin stage. The destruction of all their full-blown hopes, and a quizzing from the wits of the gallery, were the usual results. Hitchcock, in his 'History of the Irish Stage,' relates a story of a lady novice who, after making a terrible fiasco in some tragedy heroine, was cast to play a lady in waiting in Lee's 'Theodosius.' In this character she had to deliver a long bombastic message from the Emperor, but nervousness totally deprived her of memory,

and after standing lost in fright for some seconds, she stammered out, 'Madame, the Emperor despises you!' There is another story of a young man who made his *début* as Richard III., and a few days afterwards was met, attired in workman's costume, carrying a trunk upon his shoulder. Upon being asked the reason of this sudden fall from kingly state, he answered, very lugubriously, that having failed as an actor, he was obliged to resume his original calling of trunk-making to save himself from starvation.

In 1790 Smock Alley, which had long been falling to decay, was finally closed, and soon afterwards turned into a corn store. In 1815 a Catholic church was erected upon the site, and all that now remains of the Irish Drury Lane is said to be an arched passage leading into Essex Street. In 1820 the Crow Street house, which might be called the Dublin Covent Garden, ceased to be used, and in 1836 the Medical School was built upon the site. It was a fine theatre, capable of holding two thousand people: it had a stage ninety feet deep, to which could be added another forty-five feet. Daly having obtained a patent, which conferred upon him the monopoly of dramatic representations in Dublin, continued unopposed until a private theatre was opened in Fishamble Street, under Lord Westmeath, who had obtained the privilege. Frederick Jones, in 1798, succeeded Daly in the management of Crow Street, and spent 12,000*l.* upon improving it; but immediately afterwards he was compelled to close, the city being placed under martial law in consequence of the rebellion, and no person being permitted to be in the streets after eight o'clock. In 1803 he had again to close from a similar cause. His reign was brought to an end in 1814 in very much the same manner as Sheridan's. A performing dog was announced to appear in a melodrama entitled the 'Forest of Bondy,' but at the last moment the owner refused to let the animal appear, except under such exorbitant conditions that the manager refused to comply with them, and a bill was issued, announcing that 'The Miller and his Men' would be performed instead. But Mr. Dog-man had his clique, who raised a riot, broke the seats, smashed the lamps, and called for the manager to apologise. Jones refused to appear, and the riots were continued for several nights. Another disturbance, which arose from somewhat similar causes, except that it was a lady this time instead of a quadruped, brought this management to a close, and lodged the unfortunate manager in a debtor's prison. The leasehold of a Dublin theatre was a veritable bed of thorns. The most insignificant or worthless member of the company, however badly he might behave, could always find partisans who were ready, should he be dismissed, to wreck the house in his cause; while the public

papers made every lessee a target at which to shoot their most scurrilous abuse. Nor did a liberal patronage compensate the victim for such disadvantages; for, in briefly tracing the career of the various managers from Asbury almost to the present time, there is, with few exceptions, but one termination to their stories—bankruptcy.

A writer in Gilbert's 'History of Dublin' thus severely comments upon the tastes of its citizens. 'A company, however excellent, can never insure support from the Dublinites. Kemble, Lewis, Mrs. Billington, Miss Smith, Miss O'Neill, were little thought of before they appeared in London. Stars, often enormously paid, have played to less than stock business. Therefore there is no stimulus for principal actors to engage in Dublin, where the public would rather have a company of Indian jugglers, an Italian puppet-show, or the burlesque pantomime of a company of monkey rope-dancers and French dogs; and to the shame of the city of Dublin be it recorded, that at the last-mentioned exhibition there has been frequently a receipt of 40*l.* on the same night that Mrs. Talbot, Mrs. Edwin, and a good company at the Theatre Royal were performing a good comedy to less than half the money.'

In 1821 the present Theatre Royal was built and opened by Harris of Covent Garden, at a cost of 50,000*l.* From him it passed into the hands of a gentleman named Calcraft, who was not more successful than his predecessors. With this name, and with one more anecdote, we must close these brief memorials. Among Mr. Calcraft's company was a noted character called Dan Shean, who took the part of pantaloon during the pantomime season, and at other times went on in crowds and played small parts. One night, while a Roman piece was being performed, there was a discussion among the supers as to the meaning of the initials S.P.Q.R. inscribed upon the banners. Dan, who overheard the conversation, quietly suggested that it meant 'salaries paid at a queer rate.' The joke was reported to the manager, who summoned Dan to his presence, and severely reprimanded him for the remark. 'Sure, sir,' answered Dan, with a sly twinkle in his eye, 'you've been misinformed. I told 'em it meant salaries paid quite reg'lar!'

H. BARTON BAKER.

The Old Maid's Holiday.

ONE murky November afternoon Signorina Tacchi, the singing-mistress, set out on a round to the houses of her different pupils to tell them that she proposed to take a holiday on the following day, and would therefore be unable to give them their usual lesson. It was not the busy time of year; fashionable people were shooting pheasants, or seeing them shot; it was chiefly to schools that the signorina looked for employment during the autumn, and as these lay somewhat far apart she had a long walk, and was well-nigh tired out when she reached her lodgings at Islington, after repeating some score of times her mechanical formula, 'I was not feeling very well lately, and I have thought I would allow myself just one day's rest. I shall remember to deduct for ze lesson when I shall have ze honour to send in my account.'

Pale, patient Signorina Tacchi, whom no one had ever seen out of temper, who never scolded, who never complained, who was often in pain, and always tired, would scarcely have thought it worth while to desist from her labours for four-and-twenty hours only because she was feeling a little less strong than usual; but the truth was that November 12 was a day which she had observed as sacred during a quarter of a century or more of toil and struggle, an anniversary memorable to her, and to her alone; for assuredly no one else thinks of the date in connection with her, or has done so for many years past.

The Signorina treated herself to an extra hour of bed the next morning, but she did not remain long in her dreary little lodgings. By eleven o'clock she was on her knees in the Brompton Oratory, and before the hour of Vespers she had found her way to the Chapel of the Carmelites at Kensington, where the dim light, the faint odour of incense, the solemn music and the chanting of the unseen monks seemed to her to give some foretaste of that rest which she now longed for as the chief of all blessings, and which, as she well knew, could never come to her in this world. Thus she disposed of the brief hours of daylight, and by six o'clock was glad enough to reach Islington again, and to sit down to the tea and the boiled egg which her landlady, according to custom, had got ready for her. It does not sound a very cheerful way of spending a holiday, but then every one has his own tastes.

The curtains were drawn, the fire was blazing; shabby and scantily furnished as it was, the little room had something of a

friendly and homelike aspect at this hour. As soon as the signorina had eaten what she wanted—and that did not take long—she got up, unlocked an old leather-covered box, took out from it certain treasures of her own, and, drawing her chair up to the blaze, sat down to dream. The real luxury of her holiday had come at last.

Some thirty years ago, there was, at the corner of the Piazza de' Mercanti in Milan, a tiny shop kept by one Tacchi, who described himself, upon the signboard above his door, as a jeweller and worker in precious metals, but who was in truth a dealer in old gold and silver ornaments, bronzes, carvings, lace, and antiquities of all kinds. Wealthy English tourists (we were all wealthy in those days, and *milordi* as a matter of course, and enjoyed a consideration among hotel-keepers and their satellites of which increased prices and the familiarity that breeds contempt have long since robbed us) knew the place well, and some still living may recollect the eager little dealer, with his shock of dishevelled grey hair and his bright black eyes, who was almost as fond of displaying his wares as of selling them, and whose delight at discovering a genuine *cognoscente* among his customers said more for his honesty than for his shrewdness. Poor old Tacchi! he was not one of those who make fortunes quickly, and shoulder their way upwards in the world. Like the rest of his countrymen, he dearly loved a bargain, and would chaffer and haggle all the sunny morning through, over the price of an intaglio or a bit of Luca della Robbia ware; but his heart softened towards the appreciative and held out against the ignorant, so that, whereas the former often obtained the object of their desires at considerably less than its proper value, the latter were sometimes sent empty away, declaring sulkily that Italians were all knaves, and that, after all, there was no knowing whether these so-called antiquities were genuine or not. This was not business; but what was even worse was that when, as would sometimes happen, he was himself taken in, and led into purchasing an article which he subsequently discovered to be worthless, this foolish old man would by no means try to make good his loss, but would toss the clever sham contemptuously into the dark and dusty recesses of his shop, and think no more about it. As though the mere instinct of self-preservation did not teach us to do unto others as they have done unto us, and to pass on Dick's bad half-crown to Harry!

So Signor Tacchi was a poor man, albeit a contented one. Such as his business was, it sufficed to clothe and feed both him and his pretty bright-eyed daughter, Marietta—Marietta, who

was to make her own fortune, one of these fine days, by her voice, and whom his old friend Busca, the famous master, was patiently educating for the stage, refusing all payment, and giving up time and pains for the sake of friendship and the pure love of art—as a true artist should, thought old Tacchi. Busca, to be sure, was to have a share in the spending of Marietta's money when it came in, as was but just. The three had settled it all between them in many a long twilight talk, counting their chickens before they were hatched, and deriving as much innocent pleasure from the process as many others have done before and since.

Marietta, too, was contented—as contented as a girl could be. In the tiny fifth story where she dwelt with her father, high above the turmoil of the streets, she built her airy castles, and worked, and sang, living a life that was without a cloud, unless it were the occasional scoldings of Signor Busca, who was a hard master, and more given to blame than praise. Weary old Signorina Tacchi, dreaming before her fire in the Islington lodgings, remembered it all as clearly as she remembered yesterday, and saw again the flat roof whither the neighbours used to come for cool air and gossip in the evenings, and the fields of maize, and mulberry trees, and vines that stretched away beyond the walls to the hill country, and the snowy, shadowy Alps in the far distance, and the street beneath, with its two parallel lines of flag-stones for the wheels of the carriages. Along that street, on a cloudy afternoon, she had once seen old Radetzky ride, followed by his staff, while the soldiers, drawn up on either side of the way, presented arms, and all the city was silent as death, mourning behind closed shutters for the black day of Novara.

Those times were certainly not the most propitious that could have been selected for an unknown singer to make her first appearance at La Scala; for the Milanese, naturally enough, were in the sulks with their Austrian conquerors, and would not hire boxes for the season as usual; while the Austrians, not less naturally, were out of temper with the Italians, and disposed to spend as little money as might be in the rebellious city. Still, Signor Busca was of opinion that talent would force recognition, in spite of adverse circumstances, and, as he added, with great show of reason, if Marietta was to wait until justice was done and everybody had his rights, her first song would be sung in Paradise. Every day, therefore, this prima donna *in posse* took her way to Signor Busca's house in the Contrada della Palla, where her instructor, a burly gentleman in dressing-gown and slippers, awaited her, and where—happily or unhappily—there were other pupils besides herself.

If anyone had asked the singing-master whether he considered it an altogether wise arrangement that his pretty *protégée* should be thrown daily into the society of so handsome and fascinating a young fellow as Francesco Montenara, he might very possibly have answered in the negative; but he would doubtless have proceeded to point out that dangers such as this are inevitable in the career of a cantatrice; that his time was fully engaged by pupils who paid him highly; that if he chose to educate a poor girl free of charge, she must not expect to have hours devoted to her sole instruction; and further, that duets, trios, quartets, and other combinations which demand more than one voice are as much a part of a public singer's education as solos. Nobody, however, did put the question; and Francesco, the heir to the title and estates of the Counts of Montenara, sang tenor to the soprano of Marietta, the jeweller's daughter, sometimes even reading from the same score with her, without giving rise to any unpleasant remarks or suspicions.

Busca, good man, was too intent upon perfecting the work he had taken in hand, to speculate upon any sentimental side-issues: he threw himself into it heart and soul, like the short-sighted, irascible enthusiast that he was; and it has already been hinted that his mode of teaching did not err on the side of gentleness. To the Conte Francesco and other amateurs of that stamp he could be civil enough, not thinking it worth while to '*farsi cattivo sangue*,' as he said, over the failures of rich folks, who only cultivated their voices to amuse themselves; but a mistake on the part of Marietta Tacchi, whose destiny it was to use the gift of God in earning bread for herself and reflected glory for her friends, was quite another matter, and we may be sure that that young person did not utter a false note without hearing of it. Signor Busca did not mean to bully; but when his pupil disappointed him, he had a way of shouting at her in his tremendous bass voice which was certainly rather alarming; and the epithets which he employed at such times were apt to be chosen with a view rather to force than elegance. It was this propensity of his that brought about an unexpected little scene one fine morning.

'*Oh che sciocca! oh che sciocca!*' the professor was bawling, as he strode up and down the room, waving his huge arms about, while the delinquent gazed at him with wide-opened eyes, in which a suspicion of moisture was beginning to show itself. He stamped and scolded and raved till his breath gave out; and then young Montenara, who, as it happened, was the only other person present, came forward, and said quite quietly:

'Excuse me, signore, but in your excitement you have made

use of expressions which should never be addressed to a lady. Now that you are more calm, you will, I am sure, feel no hesitation about withdrawing your words, and apologising for them.'

Busca stared, reddened, looked from one pupil to the other, and finally stammered out an apology, which Marietta, alarmed and contrite, hastened to cut short. The remainder of the lesson passed off peaceably, if a little awkwardly; but when it was over, the professor begged for a few words in private with the young Count.

'Signor Conte,' said he, as soon as the door had closed behind Marietta, 'you rebuked me just now, rightly enough, I dare say; permit me, on my side, to speak a word of warning to you. I am not blind; and when I see a young man in your rank of life making himself the champion of a girl in hers, I know what is coming. Signor Conte, it will not do. You must seek elsewhere for your amusements. In her father's absence, I am responsible for Marietta Tacchi; and if any harm came to her—'

'Harm!' interrupted the other indignantly; 'you forget yourself, Signor Busca. You mean well, perhaps; but you forget yourself. I have never given you the right to suppose that I could act towards Signorina Tacchi or think of her with anything but the profoundest respect. We will not pursue the subject any further, if you please. Good morning.' And with that, Signor Francesco made a low and exceedingly dignified bow, and took himself off.

Busca was reassured. How, indeed, was he to suspect that this young aristocrat, whose ancestors had lorded it in Milan for six centuries, professed republican principles, if you please, believed in the equality of all men, and actually contemplated nothing less than a marriage with the low-born Marietta? But so it was. Francesco's father, the old Conte di Montenara, used to roar with laughter over his son's philanthropic schemes, which he thought the best joke in the world. 'Come, Francesco,' he would sometimes say, 'I am an old man, and managing a large property is very troublesome, and my people cheat me right and left. I am half inclined to abdicate. If I transfer the whole of my land to you, and retire to live in peace and quietness in the town, as I declare I should like to do, will you promise to chop it all up into allotments and divide it among the tillers of the soil, as the rights of humanity demand? Now, there is a fair offer for you: what do you say to it?' To which Francesco would gravely reply that the times were not yet ripe for such sweeping reforms as these. But although the old gentleman could afford to speak lightly of theories which were not in the least likely to be ever carried into practice, he would have adopted a very different tone in treating of a

matter so clearly within the range of possibilities as a plebeian alliance; and Francesco, being aware of this, took very good care not to mention Signorina Tacchi's name in his father's presence. Nor, indeed, was he much less reticent towards the young lady herself. He was over head and ears in love; but he would not declare his passion, nor even hint at it, being withheld partly by the knowledge that a distant prospect of marriage was all that he could offer, and partly by a becoming modesty which forced him to confess that he had as yet no grounds at all for supposing his sentiments to be reciprocated.

It need hardly be said, however, that there came a time when silence was no longer possible; and probably Marietta was not very much taken by surprise when at last Francesco delivered himself of the stupendous announcement, 'Marietta, I love you!'

It was an exquisite evening in the end of May. The last glow of sunset was fading out of the western sky; the bells were ringing the Ave Maria; the fresh green leaves were whispering under a northerly breeze, and a faint odour was rising from the flowers in the deserted Giardino Pubblico, whither these two foolish people had wandered for their evening walk, and where, of course, by the merest chance, they had encountered one another. One of them never forgot that peaceful scene to her dying day, nor failed to recall every detail of it at will, nor could ever smell the scent of lilacs in spring without tears rising into her eyes.

'*Francesco mio!*' she murmured. And anyone may fill up the remainder of the interview as his taste and fancy may dictate to him.

Dialogues of this nature, which are so full of beauty and novelty to the ears of those who take part in them, are apt to read a trifle flat; and as for the sorrows of true lovers separated by an unfortunate disparity of birth or fortune, have we not grieved over them in a thousand romances, sustained the while by a comforting conviction that all will assuredly come right in the long run, either by means of everybody turning out to be somebody else, or by another equally ingenious device? Only, there are some love-tales—a good many, perhaps—which don't end in this way; and these are seldom told, or even remembered, unless it be by some sentimental old maid, like our singing-mistress of Islington; for it is an instinct of human nature to abhor incompleteness.

Francesco and Marietta, however, as they paced to and fro in that May twilight of the year 1849, had no notion of allowing their love to perish untimely, or of yielding to the conventional obstacles which clearly enough lay before them. They were sure of being true to one another—being too young to have learnt that in this

world there is no such thing as certitude—and, that being so, all that seemed requisite was patience. Patience, and also, no doubt, a little caution. Francesco insisted strongly upon the latter point. His was one of those natures which prefer out-flanking difficulties to conquering them; and a clandestine marriage, with its inevitable consequences, appeared to him a risk too great to be undertaken. They must wait for more propitious times, he said, and for the present must keep their attachment a profound secret; and Marietta, though she hated concealments, and could not bear the thought of deceiving her father, was fain to admit the force of his arguments. All she asked was to be permitted to see her lover from time to time; and it will be readily believed that no objections were brought forward in answer to that request.

By means of cunningly devised stratagems the newly betrothed pair contrived to meet pretty frequently; and when they were alone together—when they wandered under the stars in the Giardino Pubblico, or sat at noontide in one of the shady orchards which, in those days, occupied a large part of the space between the ramparts and the town, all Marietta's misgivings vanished like Alpine mists under the sun. Then she remembered only that she was loved—and most devotedly loved, if passionate words were to count for anything—by the one who was dearer to her than all the world; the present was perfect bliss, and as regarded the future, nothing seemed impossible. But the lovers did not talk much of their prospects at such times. The subject was a disagreeable one, bristling with perplexities and uncertainties, and they avoided it, as some people avoid the subject of health, as others avoid that of money, and as nearly all avoid that of the next world.

When the spring had passed away and the first thunderstorms of summer had broken, the old Conte di Montenara, grumbling a little, began to make preparations for leaving the sunny rooms of the Palazzo where he dwelt from November to June, and the café that he loved, and the faded Marchesa to whom he had been devoted for a matter of five-and-twenty years—and betaking himself to a tumble-down castle upon the southern shore of the Lago di Garda, where, from time immemorial, the head of the family had been accustomed to pass at least four months of the year. A country life was excessively distasteful to him, but he probably consoled himself with the reflection that *noblesse oblige*. Less important personages might escape with a month of *villeggiatura* in the spring and another in the autumn; but a Conte di Montenara could no more consult his own wishes than a reigning sovereign, and was equally bound to reside among his faithful

people. So, one sunny morning, the old gentleman rolled through the Porta Orientale in his cumbrous travelling-carriage, followed by his fourgons, his horses, his valet, his French cook and the rest of his train, to the admiration of all who could see him through the clouds of dust he raised; and if anybody missed him, it could only have been his tradespeople and the mature Marchesa above mentioned. The heir-apparent remained at Milan to prosecute his musical studies, or to amuse himself in any other manner that might seem good to him: liberty being the unquestioned prerogative of heirs-apparent. Then it was that the prudent Signor Francesco was to be seen continually, in all sorts of places, with a little dark-haired lady by his side. Busca and Tacchi, busy bees who never left the hive till evening, did not encounter this couple; but where is there an Italian city in which drones do not predominate?—and these, of whom there was no lack in Milan, soon knew all about it. Patriotic drones, republican drones for the most part, who adored young Montenara for the sake of his advanced ideas, they laughed good-naturedly over his love affair, and chatted about it a little amongst themselves, but kept their own counsel, and were careful not to spoil sport. Francesco, with his nose in the air and his five wits gone wool-gathering, never heeded them: nor did Marietta, who had no eyes save for her companion, nor any fear of detection now that the formidable Conte was far away, and her father was safe at home among his dusty treasures.

What days they were, those summer days of 1849! To wake up with the earliest glimmer of morning, when the air was fresh, and the lights clear and pearly, and the water-carriers and fruit-sellers were beginning to stir in the streets below—to wake, and drink of all the golden hours to come: to escape from Signor Busca's darkened rooms in the hot noonday, when all the world was taking its siesta, and in some blue shadow of the Duomo to meet Francesco and whisper important secrets to him, glancing to right and left, the while, in pretended fear of being overheard. Now that was only pretended, for the very dogs were asleep: a stroll out at evening, beyond the city walls and the sound of the church bells, to a certain spot beneath a spreading ilex, and there to pass to the husband time to woe which somehow always was happiness. If this were not happiness, what can happiness be? And how many thousands of such bliss to me a fair allowance, why, the world would be a better place to live in than is commonly supposed. It was on the morning of September that Marietta, coming home one evening, was a good deal startled at being met by her father. "My child, I am going to send

‘What for?’ she ejaculated faintly.

‘What for? Why, to give you a sight of green fields and a mouthful of fresh air, to be sure. One requires such things when one is young. It was only yesterday that I was thinking how pale and tired you looked, and wishing that it were possible to get you away from these stifling streets for a time; and this evening, just as if the blessed saints had heard me, lo and behold! there comes a letter from my cousin Marco Tacchi—you remember Marco, the jeweller of Orta, who spent a few days with us last winter, and whom I flatter myself I was able to put in the way of a good bargain or two?—a letter from Marco, begging us to go and stay with him and his wife until the cool weather. Now, that I call a very kind and neighbourly offer, and it shows that a little attention to others is never thrown away. For myself, of course, it is impossible to take advantage of it. I cannot leave my business; and besides, I am old, and the air of Milan does as well for me as any other. But you, Marietta mia, who have never seen the mountains, except like clouds in the distance, and have no more idea of what the blue water of a lake is like than you have of chalets and Alpine roses—what a treat this will be for you!’

‘A treat!’ echoed poor Marietta in dismay, not knowing how to escape from the very thing she had so often sighed for. ‘But Signor Busca will never allow me to interrupt my lessons,’ she added hastily, remembering with joy that she too had a trade which could not be neglected.

‘*Che, che!* Busca is a man of common sense; he knows that everyone works better after a rest, and that to have a strong voice you must have good health. I will speak to him—have no fear! I will speak to him myself.’

And Marietta, not venturing upon further resistance, went up to her room, prayed heartily that Signor Busca might prove obdurate, and never slept a wink all the night through.

Francesco, when he heard the news—as we may be sure he did, the first thing in the morning—burst out laughing at the dolorous voice in which it was communicated to him. ‘Why, you little goose,’ he cried, ‘don’t you see that this is a piece of good fortune sent to us straight from heaven? Of course you will go to Orta; and of course I shall go too; and we will sit all day together in the chestnut-woods, and I shall take you out in a boat on the lake in the evenings, and there will be nobody to spy upon us, and we shall be happier than we have ever been in our lives before. What a stroke of luck!’

After this, Marietta was ready to entreat Signor Busca upon her knees to sanction her departure; and, indeed, she was very

nearly having to adopt that humiliating posture before she carried her point. Busca pished and pshawed, vowed the thing was out of the question, and refused for a long time to listen to either supplication or argument ; but at length he allowed his objections to be overruled, one by one ; and Marietta, upon solemnly promising to practise scales and exercises for at least two hours every day during her absence, was permitted to climb into the Sesto Calende diligence, for which place Signor Francesco, travelling *vetturino*, had started some hours before.

The last thirty years, as everybody knows, have wrought a vast change in all the cities of Europe. Immense sums of money have been spent, and great improvements have been effected. Street architecture and landscape gardening have taken a fresh departure ; sanitary science and typhoid fever have stepped gaily forward, hand-in-hand ; Paris and Vienna have been, so to speak, rebuilt ; while in our own beloved capital we are able to point with pride to underground railways, Thames Embankments, Albert Memorials, steam rollers, tramways, and many other delightful evidences of the advance of civilisation and art. But the broom of Progress, which has swept the busier parts of the world so ruthlessly clean, has not as yet penetrated into sundry out-of-the-way corners, such as Orta ; and if Signorina Tacchi could have revisited that quaint little town in the flesh instead of in the spirit, she would have found it but slightly altered from what it was on the warm September evening when she had entered within its walls for the first time, and when her cousin Marco had come running out in his shirt-sleeves to welcome her, followed by his fat wife and his troop of sun-burnt, black-eyed children. The streets are still narrow and dark. From the topmost stories of the overhanging houses, opposite neighbours still lean out of window and shriek at one another in their nasal Italian voices. From time to time a slow procession of priests, in gorgeous vestments, attended by banners and guttering candles and swinging censers, still wends its way towards the Monte Sacro, while the bystanders uncover their heads and devoutly drop upon their knees at the sound of the tinkling bell that precedes the Host. The children still play in the gutter among the cabbage-stalks and potato-peelings and other odds and ends which are thrown out, as a matter of course, from either side of the way, and lie there until such time as it shall please the scavenger to come and remove them. They are not the same children, nor the same cabbage-stalks, to be sure, and there is a strange name over the little shop where good-natured old Marco, who has gone to his rest this many a long day, used to sell earrings and pins for the hair and what not ; but these

are changes which it requires a close scrutiny to detect; and in all essentials life in Orta sleeps on just as of old.

There is a southern warmth of colouring, a pleasant southern indolence, about some of these Piedmontese towns which contrasts oddly enough with the Alpine scenery that lies so close to them. Little Orta, hemmed in between water and mountain, has something very like its counterparts on the Riviera and the Gulf of Salerno. Dark-eyed women wash their linen in the lake; bare-legged fishermen lounge before the open doors where dusty oleanders stand in tubs; in the gardens along the shore pomegranate and orange, aloe and cactus flourish; but if you stroll up through the Spanish-chestnut woods that clothe the slopes, you will soon find yourself among pastures as green as those of Switzerland, and an hour or so of gentle walking will lead you into a scene of bare rocks, morasses, and shaly summits in which you may with perfect facility be overtaken by a drifting mist and lose yourself. To Marietta, born and bred on the Lombard plains, all this was like a realised vision. Later in life she looked upon the Bay of Naples by moonlight, and the Alps at sunrise, and many other world-famed scenes, but not one of them seemed to her to compare with the Lago d'Orta, and in all she detected a something wanting—which something, it may be plausibly conjectured, was the figure of Francesco in the foreground.

The young Count, wisely deeming it best to avoid needless mysteries, went boldly to the jeweller's shop, and introduced himself as Signor Montenara, a fellow-pupil of Signorina Tacchi's, to the unsuspecting couple, by whom he was cordially received. That he and Marietta should like to take an occasional walk together appeared to them only natural; perhaps they may have even fancied that they were greeting a future second-cousin in the person of this young man, whose renowned surname was wholly unknown to them; but they little suspected how frequent those walks were and what words were spoken in the course of them. Had anyone overheard the words in question, he would not perhaps have been much impressed by their novelty or eloquence; nor shall they be set down here. What passed between Francesco and Marietta could interest themselves alone; and if the latter, even after the lapse of so many years, could pass something like a happy hour in recapitulating conversations out of which the meaning had long since died, let us not grudge her so harmless a pleasure, while declining to participate in it.

The little old maid, lying back in her arm-chair, with her eyes closed, looks really almost pretty, as her thoughts go back into the past. The lines fade out of her careworn, sallow face; a happy

smile dawns upon her lips ; there is actually the ghost of a dimple in one of her cheeks. She is no longer in hard, dismal, matter-of-fact London ; she is back on the shores of the Lago d'Orta, and the slant rays of the sinking sun are streaming across the mountain-side upon the glassy water and the tiny Isola San Giulio, with its cluster of houses and its old church ; the leaves of the Spanish-chestnuts are lightly stirred by the evening breeze ; a far-away, slumberous hum rises from the town below ; and it is Francesco's voice, soft and clear as of old, that murmurs, ' Marietta mia, time can never change our love.'

'Will it not?' cries the girl, seized with a sudden fear, and clasping her hands tightly round her lover's arm. 'Are you sure that it will not? We don't know what may be coming; we may be separated for months, perhaps for years. Promise me, Francesco, promise me that, whatever happens, you will never forget me?'

And Francesco, turning his eyes full upon hers, answers gravely, 'I promise.'

II.

ON November 12, 1849, the play-bills at the entrance of the Teatro della Scala announced to all whom it might concern that, owing to the sudden indisposition of Signora Boccabella, the part of Lucia, in the opera of Lucia di Lammermoor, to be given that evening, would be undertaken by Signorina Marietta Tacchi, for whom, as a young and inexperienced artist, the kind indulgence of the audience was claimed.

The above momentous proclamation did not herald Marietta's first introduction to the Milanese public. Not to every aspirant is it given to make but one step from the obscurity of private life to the sovereignty of a *prima donna* ; nor had it been possible for Signor Busca to obtain this coveted honour for his *protégée*, though he had struggled hard for it. An engagement as second soprano at La Scala had, however, been willingly offered and accepted ; and in this capacity Marietta had already filled several subordinate rôles, achieving thereby, if not a brilliant success, yet a fair measure of such modified applause as Italian audiences usually accord to those who have the good fortune to please them. But now an unexpected chance threw in her way the opportunity which Busca had long been praying for. The great Signora Boccabella, who, owing to the disturbed state of Europe and to other causes, had failed to find a winter engagement in one of the Continental capitals, had consented to delight the ears of Milan for a time, and was nightly filling the spacious theatre with her voice.

and the pockets of the administration with gold, when it suddenly occurred to her to strike for an increase of salary. The manager pleaded inability to pay the sum asked for; the lady, confident in her power to dictate her own terms, absolutely declined to sing for less; argument passed into recrimination; high words were exchanged; and the upshot of it all was that Signora Boccabella was seized with sudden indisposition, and that Signorina Tacchi was requested to occupy her vacant throne.

Marietta received this flattering proposal with an agitation which caused the hearts of those interested in her success to become as water and their knees to give way under them. The manager made her a pathetic speech, appealing to her gratitude, her common sense, and her conscience; Busca shouted and scolded his loudest; some of her fellow actors and actresses, good-natured souls whom the haughty Boccabella had treated as the dust beneath her feet, and who had no jealousy of the rising star, patted her on the back and cheered her with words of encouragement; but it was not till after a hurried interview with Francesco that our heroine felt herself braced up for any effort, and ready to accept, if need had been, a harder part than that of Lucia. The young Conte was entirely dependent upon his father, who might at any time cut him off with a shilling; and this it was that had hitherto forced the lovers to acknowledge, with many sighs, that there must be no project of a secret marriage between them. But what if Marietta were to come into possession of a salary sufficient to support them both? That thought gave the Bride of Lammermoor a courage which neither entreaties nor scoldings nor sympathy could ever have aroused in her; and the evening found her rather excited, but as bold as any lioness, and as eager for the fray.

In such a mood it would have been strange if she had not triumphed. Whether Signorina Tacchi, if her operatic career had been destined to a long continuance, would have gone down to posterity as one of the great public singers of our generation is a question which can never be answered now; but on that November evening thirty years ago, you would have found plenty of people at La Scala ready to affirm that a new Malibran had arisen among them. And, indeed, when a *débutante* possesses not only a sweet, strong, and flexible voice, but a charming presence and considerable dramatic power, what can be wanting, save time and practice, to lift her to the highest pinnacle attainable in her profession? Marietta, then, fairly carried away her audience, and aroused a far greater display of enthusiasm than ever the famous Boccabella had done.

Despite the badness of the times, the house was crowded.

Some had excused themselves for breaking through their rule of taking part in no festivity while the hated *Tedeschi* remained in Lombardy, upon the plea that local talent must be supported; others had been attracted by the busy touting of Signor Busca, others were office-holders, or adherents of the existing *régime*; while some few honest people confessed that curiosity to hear a new singer was too much for their principles. At all events, from whatever cause, there was scarcely a vacant place to be seen. Even the boxes had occupants, though these, it is true, were chiefly Austrians. Marietta seeing it all confusedly beyond the glare of the foot-lights, distinguished two individuals only in the vast concourse before her—her father, radiant, dressed in his best clothes, and crying ‘*Brava!*’ vociferously from his seat in the front row of the stalls, and Francesco, a few rows behind him, pale, handsome, and evidently too anxious to be quite at his ease. It was to them and for them alone that she sang, and little she cared of what units the remainder of the applauding crowd might be composed.

She was quite unaware, for instance, up to the end of the evening, of the presence of a certain smooth-shaven, grey-haired gentleman who, from his box near the stage, was nodding his head, beating time gently with his white-kidded hands, and otherwise testifying complete approval of the new soprano’s talent. The Conte di Montenara rented a box at La Scala every year as a matter of course, but, like his brother nobles, had made no use of it for some time past, and his appearance that night provoked much comment in all parts of the theatre, Marietta herself being probably the only person there who knew nothing of the honour conferred upon her. But when her task was at an end, and she was led three times before the curtain to receive a well-deserved ovation, there fell plump at her feet so prodigious and magnificent a bouquet that she could not help glancing up to see whence this kind gift might have dropped, and discovering the great man with his right arm still outstretched and his countenance beaming with an expression of the most benevolent patronage, she thought him a very nice old gentleman, and favoured him with a profound curtsy and a specially sweet smile all for himself.

However, she forgot all about him and his bouquet too as soon as she was off the stage, and most likely would never have given another thought to either, if the manager had not arrested her, as she was hurrying towards her dressing-room, by laying his hand upon her arm, with: ‘Excuse me, Signorina—one instant—Il Signor Conte—’ And there was the old gentleman again, stepping forward,

with his opera-hat under his arm, while those who stood near fell back to make way for him as if he had been a royalty.

'Signorina,' said he, bowing with a certain dignified affability, 'I could not refuse myself the pleasure of congratulating you personally upon a legitimate success. A legitimate success,' he repeated, speaking slowly and emphatically, as who should say, 'Take notice, all men! I, Filippo, Conte di Montenara, think this young lady worthy of personal congratulation. It only remains for you, therefore, to do the requisite shouting whenever she appears on the stage.'

Marietta thanked him very prettily; and, after bestowing upon her a few more deliberate compliments, together with some valuable hints as to the manner in which certain passages should be delivered, he once more bowed, and, to her great joy, took himself off. She did not want to listen to compliments. What she wanted was to change her clothes as quickly as might be, and to hasten to the house of Signor Busca, who, in her honour, was giving a supper-party to which her father and the manager, and—by a blessed afterthought on the part of the singing-master—Francesco himself, had been bidden. When she emerged from her dressing-room, she found the latter waiting for her.

'The others have gone on,' explained the young man; 'I said I would see you safely to the house. I am so glad! I am so happy! But don't speak till we are in the carriage. I should be capable of embracing you in public.'

So she took his arm, and they sped along in silence through the passages to the door, where a hired carriage was waiting for them in the cool night air. But just at that moment, who should come sauntering along the pavement, smoking a cigarette and humming, '*O bell' alma innamorata!*' but the same eternal old gentleman. He glanced at the pair with a peculiar, rather amused smile, took off his hat to Marietta, nodded to Francesco, and strolled on.

'Who is he?' asked Marietta, as they drove away.

'Don't you know?' exclaimed the young man, across whose face a shade of vexation had flitted. 'Why, that is my father!'

Marietta was a little startled and frightened for the moment; but who could think of possible coming evils on such a thrice-fortunate night as that? Thrice-fortunate twelfth of November! it was the happiest day Marietta had ever known; and as such she continued to observe it, with due thankfulness, up to the end of her life.

Early on the following morning the Boccabella, who had lingered in Milan upon the chance of a fiasco in the representa-

tion of 'Lucia,' and who, in that eventuality, would have been ready to strike a fresh bargain, decamped in deep dudgeon, leaving her supplanter in undisputed possession of the field. Marietta was then formally engaged as *prima donna* for the rest of the season. The remuneration offered was modest enough, truly; but it was sufficient to warrant her in engaging a servant and adding a few other comforts to her father's home; and besides—as the manager was careful to point out—the opportunity thus bestowed upon an untried *artiste* of making herself known to the world was of itself equivalent to a large salary. Marietta was more than contented, the only drawback to her happiness being that she was now so exceedingly busy all day, perfecting herself in old parts and studying new ones, that long *tête-à-tête* rambles with Francesco had perforce to be abandoned. It sometimes happened that she was unable to devise any other means of being left alone with her lover during the twenty-four hours than that of requesting him to escort her home after the opera; and of this privilege prudence forbade the young people to avail themselves too frequently; the more so as, by a most unlucky coincidence, they invariably encountered the old Conte before they were many paces away from the theatre.

'I believe my father has a rendezvous himself in this street,' exclaimed Francesco, half laughing, half annoyed, one evening, when the usual meeting had occurred, and the elder man, lifting his hat to Marietta, as was his wont, had passed on without speaking.

Marietta made no answer, but clung a little closer to her companion's arm. It had certainly seemed to her that the old gentleman had scrutinised them with a somewhat graver face than usual, and she had an uncomfortable feeling that it could hardly be mere chance that brought him to that exact spot at that exact hour every night. Still, she was far indeed from anticipating the catastrophe which was imminent.

Early next day the following missive was brought to her:—

'My beloved,—When this reaches you, I shall be already many miles away from Milan. My father has sent me off, at a moment's notice, upon a journey to Rome, Naples, Sicily, and I know not whither besides; and when we shall see one another again I cannot tell. I *dared* not refuse to obey him. When I began to object, he said something which made me fear that all is discovered, or at least suspected. I am to travel with a cousin of mine, a poor man whose pockets seem suddenly to have become filled with money, and who, if I am not much mistaken, has been engaged to act as a spy upon me. It tears my heart to go away without even bidding you good-bye; but it is for your sake, my life, that I have yielded. You do not know what power a man like my father has among such a people of slaves as we are. He could have you banished from Milan, or sent to prison—what do I say? assassinated even—without the

alightest risk or trouble to himself. Even the sending of these lines is dangerous. I have no time to say more. Adieu, my adored. Have courage; be true to me, as I will be to you, and happier times will yet come for us. I will write to you as soon as I can; and do you write to me to the Post-office, Bologna, addressing your letter to Signor Tranameno: it would not be safe to give my real name.

Yours till death,

FRANCESCO.'

Those who had taken tickets for La Scala that night in the expectation of hearing *Lucrezia Borgia* were disappointed; for Signorina Tacchi was too unwell to appear, and at the last moment another piece was substituted. But the next evening she was on the stage again, singing like a bird; and if she was a little pale and had dark circles under her eyes, who was to discover these signs of suffering under the friendly rouge? It is a trite saying that adversity shows us what we are worth and reveals to us our strong points, if so be that we have any. Little Marietta Tacchi had that of a stout heart; and the time of its trial was at hand.

The first shock of Francesco's departure was so terribly sudden that it prostrated her, as we have seen, for some few hours; but her spirit was not to be quelled even by such a blow as this; nor, looking back in after years upon the months that followed, could she feel that they had been altogether unhappy ones. Constant hard work at her art, and the sense of overcoming fresh difficulties in it every day, kept her from desponding; and besides this she had the indomitable, irrational hopefulness of youth, and—what was best of all—Francesco's letters.

These were the same which the middle-aged London singing-mistress took out so reverently on the evening of her holiday—the same old letters, yellow with age, tattered from having been folded and unfolded so many, many times, blotted with tears—with Francesco's tears, which had dropped upon them thirty years before, and perhaps with others which had been shed more recently. Nay, what is it that falls pat upon the thin paper even now? One must allow oneself a little luxury on a holiday: on working-days there is no time; and at nights one is apt to be too weary for anything but sleep.

Long ago, when the ink of the letters in question was still fresh, the sight of them used to summon up such charming smiles, dimples, and blushes into the face of their recipient that even the grumpy old post-office clerk who handed them to her through the half-opened window could not help smiling a little in return, as he peered at her over his horn-rimmed spectacles. He must have known very well who she was, for the name and features of our heroine were familiar to all Milan at that time, and he may very

THE HOLIDAY.

He did not have her letters
sent them at the post-office;
there, as all such persons ought
to take care, for this precaution:
his reason must of course be right.
He was suffering from a disease not un-
common, nor wholly without cause.
He had got into his head that his father
was a machinery for observing all his
actions. He turned to look at him in the
post-office correspondence was full of this
kind of letters, dated from Rome, Naples,
and all the cities of eternal fidelity, endearing
descriptions of scenery and cities of the South,
and exclamations against a state of
things which he scarcely call his soul his own. 'I
dare to say a word. My cousin
is convinced that he opens every
letter before it is delivered to me. I have
run out to the post-office and
waiting there for Signor Tranamena
to go up and down the street before I can
gain, &c. &c.' Marietta used some-
times to be a little less given to dilating
on the telling of them took up a good
deal of time, otherwise have been filled by a kind
of other taste. Of the latter style of
writing, in all conscience, a sufficient
proof was a faith in Francesco's constancy as
strong as the winter cheerfully enough.
His misfortune. Poor old Tacchi fell
ill. He struggled manfully at first, but
lost the will of him, and reduced him to a
long day and night. About the same
time at La Scala came to an end; and
as for fresh ones, she had no option but
to wait several weeks of weary watching and
anxiety, of which the old man gradually
lost all power had shown itself in a mild
disease, from the disease that he finally
lost his mind, when Marietta returned
with her swimming eyes, unable as yet to
be herself stricken down with the same
state.

Of the time that followed she could never afterwards recall anything, save a few disconnected incidents more like recollections of a nightmare than of realities. When she recovered full possession of her senses, she was lying in the airy, whitewashed ward of a hospital, and a sister of charity was bending over her and adjuring her not to attempt to rise—an entirely superfluous injunction, seeing that she was far too weak to move hand or foot. The windows were opened wide; the outside shutters were closed, and through a chink here and there moted sunbeams streamed across the room. After thinking about it a long time, Marietta came to the conclusion that, if she were really herself, and if this were the world, it must be summer-time. That astonishing discovery was about as much as she could manage for one day, and she soon dropped asleep. But the next morning she was stronger, and began to ask questions; and so, little by little—for her good nurses were very reluctant to say anything that might excite their patient, and would only impart their information by dribblets, in a most exasperating way—elicited the following facts. In the first place, that she had been brought to the hospital in a state of delirium in the month of March; that she had been at the point of death, had rallied, had had a relapse, and was now for the second time progressing towards convalescence. Secondly, that it was now nearly the end of June. Thirdly, that not a creature had been to inquire after her, except Signor Busca, who came every day. Fourthly, that there were no letters for her. The natural result of this was that the poor girl passed a very agitated night, and was preserved from another relapse by nothing, as the doctor laughingly declared, but her own obstinate determination to live. Perhaps, if she could have foreseen the future, she would have displayed less vitality.

Not for another month were the hospital-gates flung back to let Marietta out into the blinding sunshine; and the reader will hardly require to be told in which direction her first walk was taken.

Her old friend the post-office clerk looked commiseratingly at her, but said nothing, and produced one letter in answer to her demand.

The stamp upon it bore the date of March 15, a few days before her father's death.

'Was there nothing else?' she asked, in a rather unsteady voice.

'No, there was nothing else.'

'Quite sure?'

‘Perfectly sure.’

Marietta tottered out into the open air, and read Francesco's letter there, regardless of the passers-by. It was a letter like all the others. He wrote from Sicily, and expressed some surprise at having received no response to his last communication.

‘Write to me at once, my dearest,’ he concluded. ‘It frightens me when I do not hear, and makes me fear that something may have happened to you, or that——But no! I will not think that.’

And he had never written again? Surely he must have written!

‘I am very sorry to trouble you,’ said Marietta, re-entering the office; ‘but I have been ill a long time, and my letters may have been mislaid. Would you mind searching just once more?’

The man turned away, ransacked his pigeon-holes, and then faced his eager interrogator with shrugged shoulders and outspread hands.

‘What would you have, signorina mia?’ said he. ‘I deliver letters; I don't manufacture them.’

There was nothing more to be said; and Marietta slowly and sadly took her way towards the Vicolo Sant'Andrea, where kind-hearted Signor Busca had discovered a temporary home for the orphan on a fourth-story inhabited by two needy spinsters, who were glad to take in a boarder upon moderate terms. She exhausted herself in conjectures as to the cause of Francesco's silence, but failed to hit upon any plausible explanation of the enigma. For one miserable moment it did occur to her to doubt his constancy; but she cast out the unworthy suspicion from her mind with shame, and asked pardon of her absent lover in the spirit.

Time alone, it was evident, could solve the mystery; since there could be no use, and might perhaps be danger, in writing to Palermo, where neither Francesco nor anyone else would be likely to be staying for pleasure in the month of July. No; he must have come north again long ago—might he not even be in Milan at that very moment? Strengthened by this new hope, Marietta spent the best part of three days in roaming among the highways and byways of the city. She revisited all her old haunts—the Giardino Pubblico, the orchards within the ramparts, the corners where the cathedral buttresses flung their dark shadows upon the flags, and a hundred other familiar spots, the sight of which sent a sharp pain through her heart and brought the tears into her eyes; for she was still very weak. Hither and thither she wandered, while the sultry hours wore on, a weary, dusty, forlorn little figure, but no Francesco came to meet her. At last, after a sleepless

night of prayers and tears, she made up her mind that she must waste time no longer in this fruitless search, but trust in the mercy of God and set about earning her living once more. So she took a roll of music in her hand, and presented herself at the house of Signor Busca, who had been waiting patiently for this moment, and was right glad to welcome his old pupil again.

‘Aha!’ he cried; ‘this is as it should be. When a nightingale feels no wish to sing—’ Here he wagged his head very solemnly. ‘But that is all over now, and you have come to rejoice the ears of your old master, who does not have such treats every day, let me tell you. What shall it be? You must not fatigue your voice too much at first; but I think, just for the sake of old times, we must begin with “*Verranno a te sull’ aura.*”’

He sat down at the piano as he spoke, and executed a joyous flourish.

Poor Busca! Poor Marietta! That was a sad morning for them both, and one of them could never bear to think of it afterwards. They tried to make light of it, and to speak with feigned confidence of the future, but there was no disguising the fact that, for the time, at any rate, Marietta’s voice was utterly gone. At the end of a week they were forced to acknowledge that it was useless to try any longer, and then the waters went over our poor little heroine’s soul. Busca did his best to comfort her, and so did a few of her old companions who found her out in these days of her adversity.

‘Hundreds of others have suffered in the same way,’ they said. ‘Your voice will come back, some day, as strong as ever—you will see.’

But she shook her head. ‘No,’ she said, in a quiet, patient way, ‘it never will.’

And she was right: it never did.

And now, in this sore extremity, Marietta could hold out no longer against a temptation which she had already stifled more than once. She took pen and paper, and wrote, as best she could, through her blinding tears:

‘Francesco mio! come to me. I cannot bear it any more. My father is dead; I have been ill since the spring, and now my voice is gone, and I am ruined. I do not know where you are, or whether this will ever reach you, but I must write to you, or die. Perhaps we shall never be married now, for I cannot make money; but if I may see you once—only once again—I cannot go on. Forgive me for sending this to your house; it is the only address I know.

‘Your most loving, most unhappy

‘MARIETTA TACCHI.’

This missive she sealed, directed to His Excellency the Signor

Montenara, Palazzo Montenara, and dropped the letter-box before nightfall.

Three days—six days passed without a reply, but that was not surprising, for the letter would, of course, have to be forwarded, and Francesco might be far away. On the seventh, however, the sound of his heavy footstep was heard outside Marietta's door, and presently someone knocked gently. She had hardly the strength to murmur, 'Come in.'

It was not Francesco, but his father, who entered, and stood silently before her. Marietta gave a faint cry, and covered her face with her hands.

But the old gentleman was not angry, it appeared. 'So you are not your voice!' he said quite gently. He was standing on the threshold in an almost deferential posture, and looked by no means a formidable person in his white linen suit and his loose Russia-leather shoes. His eyes were wandering over the shabby little room and its meagre furniture with a comical expression of commiseration. 'Eh, poverina!' he ejaculated.

'How did you find out——?' gasped Marietta, unable to finish her sentence.

'I opened your letter,' the old gentleman answered, looking very much ashamed of himself. 'It sounds a most dishonourable thing to have done, but I give you my word that I had no idea—I had no conception.—The truth is that, my son being away from home, I am in the habit of breaking the seals of a great number of envelopes addressed to him; there are so many advertisements and begging-letters, and so forth, you understand, which are not sent by post. But of course, if I had guessed what was in the envelope, though, after all, it was just as well.'

The Signore Conte seemed singularly troubled and embarrassed. Marietta, who, on his entrance, had supposed herself to be confronted by a justly incensed tyrant, knew not what to make of this poor old man, who looked more ready to weep than to retaliate, and could only stare at him in mute bewilderment. He then sank down into a chair, and after wiping his forehead with a pocket-handkerchief: and sighing loudly several times, he began a plaintive soliloquy.

'O Padre! what have I done that it should fall upon me the blame upon the innocent? Was it I who made the world, and I thought that there should be differences of rank, and that my son should mate with one of his own breed? If a young man comes to amuse himself with fantastic republican notions, what I knew he would throw off as easily as the whooping-cough and the measles, was that any fault of mine? And now, at my

age, when I ask for nothing but rest and peace, I have to come all the way from Peschiera, on the hottest day of the year, in order to inflict one more blow upon an unhappy child who has done no wrong, and who has already lost nearly everything. There is a great deal of injustice in this world—a great deal of injustice,’ concluded the Conte pathetically, meaning probably to imply that both his hearer and himself were hardly used.

‘Signore,’ exclaimed Marietta, clasping her hands, ‘let me see him once more! You speak kindly—I don’t know why—I thought you would be very angry. But it is all over now; I know quite well that I can never be his wife; it was impossible from the first, and I ought to have seen that it was. Only let me see him once more—just once more—to say good-bye. It is not a great deal to ask.’

The Conte shifted uneasily in his chair. ‘And so Francesco was to have married you,’ he murmured, after a pause; ‘and you were to have supported him upon your earnings, and after a time you were to have come home and captivated the silly old father’s heart by your beauty, and he was to have given you his blessing, and everything was to have ended well. Ah, my dear child, one sees these stories acted upon the stage, and sometimes, if the play be a good one, they are pretty enough; but in real life, believe me, nothing of that kind takes place. In real life every man does the best he can for himself; and those who steal their neighbours’ coats are sent to prison, instead of having cloaks offered to them into the bargain; and rich men feast, and beggars starve, and republicans are chained up, and counts marry countesses!’

‘Is—is your son going to marry a countess?’ asked Marietta in a low voice.

‘What is the use of concealing it from you? He is married already!’ There was a long silence. A sleepy undercurrent of sound—the rumbling of wheels, the indistinct murmur of voices, and the slow clanging of a distant bell, rose from the city below. The Conte, who had been sedulously examining his yellow shoes, glanced furtively up, at last, at his companion. She was lying back in her chair, pale indeed, yet scarcely paler than she had been from the outset, and her face showed little sign of other emotion.

Meeting his eyes, she spoke; and there was only a faint tremor in her voice. ‘When was it, signore?’

‘About ten days ago. He is married to a Sicilian lady of good family. The match was arranged long ago, though I suppose he knew nothing about it till he arrived at Palermo. It was I who sent him there, thinking it was time the affair was concluded; and, if you will believe me, it was as much for your sake as his

that I packed him off in such a hurry. It was easy enough to see that he was desperately in love with you, and I could not suppose that his intentions were honourable—you do not understand these things, and it is needless to talk about them—and I had taken a fancy to you ever since that first night when you appeared in *Lucia*. I did not choose that you should come to harm through any son of mine; and so I sent him about his business. I don't say, mind you, that I should have acted differently if I had known the true state of the case; but that was how it happened. And now, signorina, what shall I say? The thing you wished for, I could not give you; but what I can do, I will. I am rich; I have influence with all classes of society; and if'—

But the remainder of the Conte di Montenara's offer remained unspoken, for Marietta had fainted dead away.

Such was the story of Signorina Tacchi's life, as she recalled it thirty years afterwards. It ended there—or rather, it did not quite reach that point; for on a holiday one would fain keep to happy reminiscences. In all those toilsome, colourless years that had followed, where was there a single day worth the remembering? Many people whose whole lives have been darkened by disappointment can yet look back, when their journey's end is drawing near, upon this or that task accomplished, and say, with sober satisfaction, 'I have not lived altogether in vain;' but poor Signorina Tacchi could only have said, 'I have lived.' It is true that at certain times this had been in itself an achievement; but there is little comfort in the memory of having been nearly, though not quite, reduced to starvation. The old Conte di Montenara, who appears to have been a soft-hearted old fellow, would have provided for her, if she would have allowed him; but she was proud, and chose to earn her own bread. So Busca helped her to establish a small connection as singing-mistress in Florence; and thence, after some years, she shifted her quarters to Naples and elsewhere, sometimes making enough to live in comparative comfort, sometimes contriving with difficulty to keep body and soul together. She was a painstaking and most patient teacher; but, whether because she had not the requisite knack or because she lacked enthusiasm, she never became a successful one; and at fifty years of age she was living in lodgings at Islington and instructing young ladies in Kensington and Tyburnia at the rate of five shillings an hour, or seven-and-sixpence where two or three of a family shared her services. Of such an existence what can be said, save, by way of consolation, that it cannot last for ever? Probably the very happiest day that had fallen to Signorina Tacchi's lot since July 1850 was that on which her doctor, with some circumlocution and

a good deal of grave pity in his voice, had given her to understand that she had organic disease of the heart. From that moment she took fresh courage, seeing land before her, and, being relieved of that worst of all spectres, the dread of a helpless and penniless old age.

And with all due submission to Dante, there are worse aggravations of present misery than memories of a happier past. Surely, when all else fails, it is something to have joyous recollections, and a holiday in which to indulge in them. Such, at all events, would have been the verdict of Marietta, who perhaps was not cast in the same mould as Francesca da Rimini. She always believed that her lover would have been true to her if her silence had not unhappily caused him to fancy her false to him; and as what might have been is a subject upon which everyone is free to form his own opinion, Francesco may be allowed the benefit of the doubt. At first she used to comfort herself with the thought that Francesco's heart still belonged to her, and that, though they could not be together in this life, they might be reunited in some future one; but as time went on, and the plan of the world, with its remorseless logic and irresistible law of change, became clearer to her, this hope faded away little by little, and if she longed for death, it was rather for the sake of rest than with the expectation of any fulfilment of the dreams of her youth.

Implora pace. She has fought a hard fight, she has struggled bravely against odds, she has traversed many a flinty track and steep mountain-ridge, and now surely the time is at hand for the weary to be at rest. Yet on this twelfth of November, the anniversary of her long-faded triumph, she can still forget all pain and sorrow for a few hours, and be young again. She is wandering by the sunny shores of the Lake of Orta; she is hurrying through the starlit streets of Milan on Francesco's arm; time and space are annihilated, and two lovers are happy. And soon her day-dream turns into a sleeping one. Her eyes are closed, a peaceful smile is upon her lips; the clasp of her fingers which hold the precious letters relaxes, and they slide down into the fender, where presently a hot coal falls upon one of them, and so they blaze up and are consumed and lost to her for ever. Sleep on, tired little drudge, while the city chimes ring out the hours, and the candles sink in their sockets, and the ashes on the hearth turn grey. The night is far spent; the day is at hand.

With early morning, in came the landlady, a lean, rough-headed woman, and desecrating the Signorina still asleep in her arm-chair, began to rate her soundly. 'Well, I declare! Never been in yer bed all the night through! Talk about being hill!—why,

what *can* you expect? If ever there was one to fly full in the face of Providence, 'tis you. Now, just you get up out of that cheer this immediate, and—' But Mrs. Jones's well-meant scolding dropped suddenly into an awe-struck silence when she drew nearer, and, looking into the face of her lodger, perceived that she was dead!

W. E. NORRIS.

Among the Blue Mountains.

BY J. ARBUTHNOT WILSON.

I MUST frankly admit that I have given this paper an *ad captandum* title. Nobody who has ever really been in Jamaica talks about the Blue Mountains, any more than tourists in Scotland talk about the Grampians, or their comrades in North Wales about the Cambrian Hills. There is one solitary height, the tallest in the island, which bears the name of Blue Mountain Peak; but that is its own private designation, secured to it by the copyright of public usage, and never extended, even by courtesy, to those spurious imitators, the surrounding hills. Still, I must call my article something; and as English people, who know the West Indies in Keith Johnston's Atlas only, have decided that these are the Blue Mountains, let them be Blue Mountains by all means, and let us waste no more time in discussing that preliminary question of names, for which the immortal William, at least in the person of Juliet, had such a sublime contempt.

Not that they are really blue, or anything like it. Mountains in the tropics never are. It is only in temperate climates that distance lends its proverbial enchantment to the view: seen through the clear and cloudless sky of the Caribbean, those peaks, some ten or twelve miles distant from my temporary home in Blundell Hall, Kingston, show out this morning in all their true greenness, as vividly as if we were looking at them across a valley a hundred yards wide. If you want to see really blue mountains, you must stand on the hills behind Barmouth of a summer evening, and see the sunset fade away over the purple and azure tops of Bardsey Island and Yr Eifel. Or you must look northward in the early morning over the calm waters of Como, and watch the blue peaks of the lower Alps standing out against the pink-tipped summits of their snow-clad neighbours. But tropical mountains always look nearer than they really are, through the intense clearness of the air; and never present those beautiful colours which one sees among the Swiss or Scotch valleys, except on a few rare occasions when the sun sets behind thick banks of cloud, and lights them up for a moment with glorious touches of crimson, green, and gold.

For a week I have been lounging about Blundell Hall—every lodging-house in Kingston is called a hall—and I am now getting

tired of the town, with its ramshackled streets, its endless clouds of dust, its broken-down omnibuses, and its chattering population of ragged negroes. For a week I have sat upon the verandah daily after dinner in a cool rocking-chair, and watched the mist gathering or dispersing about the hill-tops; and now I am beginning to want a little change of air and scene, with a closer peep at these distant mountains. If there is anything beautiful in Jamaica, which I am much inclined to doubt at the present moment, it must be found amongst those green heights. An official in the Port Royal Hills, to whom I had letters of introduction, has asked me up, with the ordinary boundless hospitality of colonies, 'to spend a month or two, if possible,' and I am going this morning to take him at his word, at least so far as a fortnight's infliction of my presence is concerned. I am now standing in the courtyard of the 'hall,' awaiting my buggy, which is three-quarters-of-an-hour late, and causing much amusement to the easy-going persons around me by my Britannic indignation at being kept waiting.

Everything in Jamaica is always late. The whole island moves along in such a happy-go-lucky unpunctual fashion that I am sometimes tempted to believe it cannot revolve like the rest of the earth once in every twenty-four hours, but must have a separate and much slower cycle of its own, if indeed it does not absolutely stand still. There is a railway to Spanish Town, for example, thirteen miles in length; and it is on record, say the local gossips, that a train has more than once taken thirteen hours to accomplish the distance. Occasionally the stoker finds himself short of fuel, whereupon he stops the engine, gets out and cuts a little 'bush,' relights his fire with the green wood, and then quietly proceeds on his journey. These facts I cannot myself vouch for—I give them to you as they were given to me—but I can safely assert that such a slow line as this Jamaica railway I have never met in all my multifarious experience of the ends of the earth. It is just the same with the horses and buggies. I went last night to a neighbouring livery-stable, and asked if I could have a carriage to go to Gordon Town. A coloured man was wiping down a horse: he paused a moment, looked at me, answered 'Yes, sah,' and then went on wiping down till the operation was completed, without taking any further notice of my insignificant presence. When he had finished, he said he would find 'the properiatah;' and after about twenty minutes more the proprietor arrived. I wanted to start at six o'clock, in order to avoid the heat; and the proprietor's first endeavour was to persuade me that nine was a much more convenient hour. I stuck

to six with admirable pertinacity, upon which he proceeded to show that Thursday was a more suitable day for starting than Wednesday. At last he was induced to accept the day and the hour, and then followed a lengthy discussion as to the kind of vehicle. I was determined to have a one-horse-buggy: the proprietor was convinced that my dignity and the profit of his establishment imperatively demanded the use of a lumbering carriage and pair. When I had at length delivered a successful ultimatum upon this point, there remained twenty minutes' discussion as to price; and now, after all these delays, it is actually a quarter to seven, and I am still pacing about the court of Blundell Hall in undiminished wrath, while the peccant buggy, in spite of three relays of messengers sent in search, seems no nearer its arrival than it was an hour since.

At last, however, it draws up at the door, a sort of bankrupt dog-cart with a worn tarpaulin hood, a sorry piece of horseflesh between the shafts, and a jolly, fat, roundfaced, but very ragged negro-boy as driver and *compagnon de voyage*; for since I insisted on the buggy, we must needs share the same seat. The eight or ten surrounding negroes—there is always a little crowd collected wherever a white man is doing anything under the sun, however trivial—greet him affectionately as Isaac; and Isaac, being sternly reproved for the delay, proceeds to enumerate its principal causes as due to the fact that the mare wanted shoeing, that one trace broke, that the hood had to be mended, that the axle required splicing, and that he was for some time occupied in binding together the box with an end of rope—all which surgical operations he details at considerable length, in a language only partially understood by the insignificant fraction of the people who has the honour of at present addressing you.

We get in amid an admiring chorus of 'Mind de bocera's bag!' 'Put in de bocera's portmantew!' 'Yah, drike de bocera careful in de ole buggy, Isaac!' and other remarks not tending to increase my confidence in the stability of our craft. But Isaac nods a cheerful assent, takes the whip in his hand with much alacrity, and starts off with such a bounce and such a trot as no one would have supposed the ancient mare capable of performing.

For some distance from Kingston the road winds between tumble-down negro huts, which gradually yield place to dusty cactus-hedges. Anything more picturesque in sound, anything more disreputable in real life, than a cactus-hedge, it has not been given to the mind of man to conceive. Imagine a gaunt growth of dry and spiky poles, a grey-green in hue, an inch deep in dust, sprawling irregularly upwards ten or twelve feet towards

the coppery or leaden sky, and shutting out all view on either side, and you have some faint conception of the hideous barricade known as a hedge in Jamaica. No living creature could break through it. An elephant would stand appalled before its thickset row of prickles and thorns, projecting on every side from the close bundles of cactus poles. Between two such graceless barriers we wend our way for a mile or two from Kingston, the road seeming like the travesty of a Devonshire lane or the tropical representative of a jealous landlord's path, beset on either side by brick walls. Not a glimpse of nature anywhere. Dusty road in front, dusty road behind, dusty hedge to right, dusty hedge to left, and dusty heaven overhead. If this is the country, even the bankrupt town was a trifle better. Add the fact, that the sun is already getting up in the sky, and you can easily guess that the drive to Gordon Town is not at first sight a pleasant one.

Suddenly, after a mile or two of this dismal prospect, a turn in the road brings me out of the grimy hedges into an open space. In one moment the whole scene has changed as if by magic. You have noted how the Dismal Cavern in a pantomime is shifted at a single twist so as to reveal the Dazzling Halls of Splendour with the Magnificent Cataract of Real Water viewed through the vista in the background. In somewhat the same manner, though with less theatrical tinsel, the cactus-banks unexpectedly subsided; the road displayed itself as running close by the edge of a beautiful gorge; the mountains rose majestic in the distance; and a silver stream plunged in little cascades through the smiling valley at our feet. The contrast was almost *too* scenic in its effect. One could hardly believe that a moment would suffice to pass from the grim prison of the cactus-walls to the exquisite panorama which spread before me. For the first time in my life I saw the tropics at their best. They can be very beautiful when they choose, I will allow, although I love them not; and certainly this first drive from Kingston was enough to convince me of the fact.

Thenceforward, as far as Gordon Town, there was no lack of interest. We mounted by a slow declivity, along the banks of the little river—which grew into a pretty brawling torrent as we got deeper and deeper into the mountain's heart—through overhanging crags and steep hill-sides, covered with tangled fern and huge circular aloe plants. There was a little too much verdure, perhaps, upon the sheer precipices, but that is the prevailing fault of tropical scenery. Bare rocks are rare or almost unknown, because dense creepers and other hardy vegetation spread everywhere, even over the scantiest soil. Thus an eye accustomed to the barren grandeur of European mountain passes is a little wearied by the

monotonous greenness of the outlook. There is nothing to parallel the stern solemnity of Glencoe, the terrible desolation of Pfäfers, or even the grey crags and boulders of Llanberis. From Ceylon to Nicaragua, the tropics display everywhere a draped figure. Nature is choked and strangled, as Comus puts it, with her waste fertility. We miss the grateful interchange of rock and meadow, of naked sandstone and wooded height, of chalk cliff or granite boulder, with overgrown slope or smiling cultivation. All alike is one rich and tangled mass of verdure, which spreads its unvarying mantle over the whole face of Nature. So her features are too rounded in their outline and too same in their contour. Nevertheless, the view was beautiful enough, and specially beautiful to an eye fresh from twenty days of ocean travelling and a week of Kingston streets. I could not avoid showing my delight and surprise to my travelling companion; but Isaac did not respond to my enthusiastic outpourings. He evidently regarded my admiration as a matter for silent contempt, and observed that 'Dere wasn't no good in all dat bush. Wish bocarra come from Englan', plant him all wid coffee tree.' The negro mind is strictly utilitarian, and considers the beauties of nature as obvious blots in the system of things. 'What you want to come see de mountains for?' asked an old negress at the Natural Bridge in Virginia. 'For me, sah, gib me de lebbel road to dribe upon.'

At Gordon Town the level road comes to an end, and a most ridiculous end it looks, too. The broad carriage-highway stops short abruptly at the foot of a hill, without any kind of warning; while a horse-path diverges from the side, conveying the traveller up to Newcastle and the Port Royal Hills. Riding is a necessity in Jamaica; there is no help for it, and no other way of getting over the ground. For my part, however, I detest riding. A horse is to me a wild beast of uncertain temper and incomprehensible psychological idiosyncrasies, upon whose back I never mount save at the bidding of sternest need. A donkey I do not mind: its character, to be sure, is equally a mystery to me, and its obstinate determination to oppose my most rational desires is certainly provoking; but it is not big enough or vicious enough to become an object of personal dread. A horse, on the other hand, besides possessing an absolutely incalculable individuality, urging it to kick, plunge, rear, shy, bolt, or stand doggedly still the moment I get upon its back, is also of sufficient size to do me grievous bodily harm by these its private eccentricities. Therefore I eschew and abjure a saddle-horse, whenever any other means of conveyance is to be obtained. Why this should be so, I cannot tell you. I was brought up in the country, and I have been

accustomed to horse-flesh from my youth up. But somehow the equine race has never taken kindly to me. There are some people who can handle bees and wasps with impunity—Sir John Lubbock has even taken out a wasp to dinner in his waistcoat-pocket—while there are other persons who cannot safely come within five hundred yards of a hive, so strongly does the intelligent bee object to their personal appearance and peculiarities. It is the same as regards the relations subsisting between myself and the entire community of horses. No horse will endure my presence for a moment. Some of them throw me over their heads; some of them sit down with me and attempt to roll me like a pancake; some of them only refuse to budge an inch so long as I remain in the saddle; but one and all regard me as a natural enemy, to be thwarted and humiliated by every means in their power. I regret the situation, but I am compelled to accept it. All attempts at conciliation have failed; and I now sadly recognise the fact that open war exists between us.

On the present occasion, however, I must meet my enemy face to face, and conquer him. It is impossible for a white man to walk five miles in length and four thousand feet in height under this blazing sky; so I reluctantly place myself across the broad ribs of a sturdy hill pony, and commence the ascent. Fortunately the Jamaican pony is not a savage specimen of his race. Docile, sure-footed, and by no means given to bolting, the only unpleasant trick in which he indulges is a habit of jerking his rider out of the saddle and down a precipice whenever he happens to be passing a peculiarly deep and dangerous gully. This little trait in his character, however, may be effectually suppressed by holding a tight rein as you go down hill, and giving him his head as you go up. Indeed, the pony only objects to any reversal of this his accustomed mode of procedure. So I manage to get up the hill with as little discomfort as any man can reasonably expect when he rides on the back of a hostile beast whose fixed desire is the sudden and violent termination of his earthly career.

As to my portmanteau, that comes after me by what may be called 'the luggage-van of the country,'—in other words, on a negro's head. Half-a-dozen black men, attired in a graceful costume of sackcloth, were lying in the soft dust by the roadside as I dismounted from the buggy at Gordon Town. The proprietor of the livery-stable informs me that one of these gentlemen would perhaps be willing to carry up my portmanteau for a fitting remuneration. So I ask them if any fellow wants to earn a dollar. The offer is met by a contemptuous silence. I make it a dollar and a quarter. A few negroes open their eyes sleepily and look

inquiringly at one another; so I go on rising, a shilling at a time, till I reach two dollars. At last the elder men begin to expostulate with the younger. The bocera gentleman wants his bag carried; isn't any nigger—*nagur* they call it—going to help him? Nobody responds. Finally, a young man thinks his wife would take it; for himself, he seems far too lordly to undertake the task. So the wife is hunted up and brought forward—a comely, strapping negress, with a red bandanna tied not ungracefully round her head, and a short petticoat which shows a pair of stalwart ankles and feet, innocent of shoe or stocking, underneath. Clemmy—her full name is Clementina Angelica—takes up my somewhat ponderous portmanteau as if it were a feather, poises it lightly upon her head, now deprived of its bandanna, and stalks forward on the road with an easy grace, straight as an arrow and strong as a horse. These negresses have always splendid upright figures, because they are accustomed to carry pails of water and other heavy weights upon their heads from childhood upward; and the merest country wench, going to market with a basket of yams and mangoes on her woolly cranium, marches with a quiet dignity and ease which few of our European great ladies could ever acquire.

We make a queer solitary procession up the lonely mountain path, Clemmy and I: myself, riding first, with white umbrella opened over my head, urging the not unwilling pony to mount a specially steep incline: Clemmy, toiling behind, with the portmanteau poised easily on her plaited hair, her arms free and disengaged, and a leafy branch in one hand employed in encouraging the pony from time to time by a gentle admonishment *a tergo*. Clemmy is very communicative, not to say boisterous. The distance that separates servants and masters in Europe is little felt in tropical countries, because the separation is too vast to be bridged over. We dislike familiarity from our white inferiors because we feel the barrier is too artificial to bear trifling with: but we rather encourage it in negroes because we know nothing can ever make them forget the gulf that yawns between us. So Clemmy gives me much information as we go regarding her own domestic arrangements and her five children; criticises my style of horsemanship in a manner which I cannot truthfully describe as flattering; guffaws loudly with a prodigious display of white teeth whenever I address her; and objurgates the pony in terms of execration which I should feel under other circumstances as eminently unsuited to feminine lips. These lips, however, are so *very* thick that the incongruity does not strike one as remarkable. Unfortunately, we experience *some* difficulty in making ourselves mutually

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intelligible ; for our views as to the grammar and pronunciation of the English language do not entirely coincide ; and this drawback somewhat prevents the flow of soul that might otherwise be expected. But we get on capitally together, in spite of minor obstacles, for every negro is good-humoured and communicative, if you will merely take the trouble to listen and answer ; while I, for my part, am glad to embrace the opportunity of studying comparative psychology in the concrete whenever I come across my fellow-man (or fellow-woman) in suitable positions for rational conversation. Thus we managed to strike up quite a friendship by the time we reached my friend's house ; and I actually went so far in my generosity as to present Clemmy with an extra shilling over and above her exorbitant bargain, on the distinct understanding that she should come up the hill again to carry my luggage down on the return trip—which I need hardly say she never did. The whole family doubtless paid for board, lodging, washing, and tobacco for an entire month out of my nine shillings ; and I can venture to assert that neither Clemmy nor her great hulking husband did another stroke of work of any sort till every penny of it was spent.

And the road ? And the scenery ? Well, I have more than once admitted that I am somewhat prejudiced against the tropics, but I freely allow that the Port Royal Hills are beautiful. A narrow horse-track, often scarcely distinguishable, curves and zig-zags round the spurs of the hills, opening at each turn new and more extensive panoramas in the deep green valleys below. They say that Queen Isabella the Catholic once asked Columbus to give her some idea of the new island which he had discovered, and that the old sailor crumpled up a piece of note-paper in his sunburnt fist, laid it down on the table, and said, 'That is Jamaica.' Whether the story is true or not, it affords a very good description of the country. Jamaica is one great tangled network of mountains, intersected in every direction by valleys and gorges, which look as though some huge giant had crumpled the plastic rock in his fist, just as Columbus crumpled the sheet of paper. To get from one point at the foot of the hills to another point some five miles off in a straight line, as the crow flies, but perhaps a few thousand feet above you, one must wind round ten or fifteen miles of jutting shoulders, and cross half-a-dozen intervening gullies. Newcastle, the chief military cantonment, gleams like a white streak on the mountain side just across yonder valley, and I should guess by an English standard that it might take me some twenty minutes to ride over the distance between it and me : but I now know that a couple of hours will hardly suffice to circumvent all the twisted

wiggles of the path, or to toil up and down all the intermediate ascents and descents of the weary road.

Yet weary it cannot really be, while such lovely prospects keep opening out afresh at every turn. The hills on either side, above and below—for we are steadily winding along the steep slope, with a precipice rising over us on one hand, and a precipice yawning beneath us on the other—are thickly clad with an exquisite covering of tropical ferns, huge club-mosses, and matted undergrowth of lesser vegetation. Here and there, in the valley below, a great cotton-tree rises from its buttressed trunk, and rears wide into the sky its massive branches, pendent with the thick grey lichen which negroes graphically know as ‘old man’s beard.’ On the rounded bosses of the hills above, groves of mango-trees spread their thick shade; and through the dense foliage the pink-cheeked fruit gleams as beautifully as the apples in a Devonshire orchard—not more beautifully, however, I must stoutly assert, for nothing tropical will ever shake my allegiance to the loveliness of our own dear English soil. Then the broad-leaved banana bushes, the great slender cocoa-nut palms, the occasional tree-ferns, the rarer mountain-cabbages, the monstrous aloes, with their huge spike of yellow blossoms reared like a maypole to the clear sky overhead, the very negro huts that we pass at distant intervals, surrounded by crimson hibiscus trees, and flanked by straggling patches of half-uncultivated yam and coffee plantation,—all these go together to make up a picture which is like a strange fairyland to one who sees it for the first time.

But even this is *not* the tropics of our imagination. It is beautiful, it is quaint, it is luxuriant, but it is *not* ‘all our fancy painted it.’ You remember the word-painting in ‘*Enoch Arden*’; you remember the lines in ‘*Locksley Hall*’:—

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,
 Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of Paradise.
 Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag,
 Slides the bird o’er lustrous woodland, swings the trailer from the crag;
 Drops the heavy-blossom’d bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree—
 Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea.

Well, if this picture is true anywhere, it is true in Jamaica, in Ceylon, in the Malay Archipelago. But even there it is far from the literal reality. This hill-side, for example, by no means comes up to the description. I grant the lustrous woodland, and I even allow that the mango may be fairly alluded to as a heavy-fruited tree. But I deny the crag, I refuse to credit the bird, and I utterly abjure the heavy-blossomed bower. Green is the characteristic of tropical scenery—monotonous green, without a single

blossom worth the name. From the point where my pony is now halting I can see a marvellous variety of foliage and a strange mixture of every shade in verdure ; but not a single flower of any sort, save the one crimson hibiscus bush which grows beside the negro cottage in the foreground.

An hour and a half of this solitary procession, passing, perhaps, half-a-dozen human habitations, brings us at last to my friend's door. Fortunately for me, Clemmy knows the way, or I should never have found it for myself. The horse-path has a knack of dividing every now and then into two still narrower and less clearly marked paths, each of which leads by equally devious ways to some lonely white man's house upon the scattered peaks. There is no sign-post, and nobody from whom to ask the road. After a while one gets accustomed to this solitary mode of travelling, and one learns to distinguish the landmarks afforded by the higher peaks. But just at first, I must confess, the solitude somewhat appals one. There are no tigers or other wild beasts, it is true, lurking in the dense jungle of fern which surrounds the path on either side ; but I have come to Jamaica with my head filled with frightful stories of the last rebellion ; and I have not yet learnt to recognise the tame negro for the helpless, inoffensive, kindly, christianised savage that he really is. Now and then, at long intervals, we meet a solitary cultivator returning from his work, a murderous-looking cutlass in his hand, and a childlike smile upon his broad black face ; and though he salutes me with a friendly ' Marnin', sah,' and inquires of Clemmy for the health of her picknies, I must allow that he impresses me with a vague sense of my utter loneliness. Vast unpeopled nature lies around me ; a narrow horse-path in front and behind me ; a precipice above and below me ; and two of my black fellow-creatures by my side. In a week or two I shall have learned to smile at my own simplicity in imagining that these peaceable people could ever devise any harm against me ; but just at present I am glad enough to dismount from my wild animal at my friend's door, and to see the patient Clemmy lay down my portmanteau, as smiling and as fresh as when she first took it up at Gordon Town.

Mango Top, the house where I am to pass a fortnight, stands on the very summit of a minor hill, some four thousand feet above the sea. St. Catherine's Peak, the highest point in this part of the range, rises two thousand feet higher in the background, and forms the limit of vision northward. Mango Top itself is a typical Jamaican mountain residence. Wooden, low, one-storied, it looks externally a mere mass of Venetian blinds, bound together by a framework of posts. You enter, and a large square piazza runs all

round the building, forming a sort of shade for the inner rooms, which are dark or even gloomy. But from the piazza itself you get a series of magnificent panoramic views, spreading like a map on every side. This is really the 'living-room' in every mountain house. You retire to the dining-room for meals, and to the central apartment of all for a little music; but day and night you sit in the piazza, with all the windows open, and the Venetian blinds flung wide on either side. There is no wall; the blinds make up the whole outer frame of the house. Thus the building is cool and breezy, though in other respects a trifle too public. There are no doors, except to the bedrooms; all the other rooms communicate directly with one another—a circumstance which renders Jamaican houses peculiarly ill-adapted for engaged couples. But as my host and I are the only occupants of Mango Top, this difficulty does not afford us any serious discomfort.

The hospitality of the hills is unbounded. Once you have passed through the desolate tract at the bottom, you find yourself suddenly once more in the midst of European society. A little colony of officials has occupied the heights on every side of Mango Top. The governor lives in a low wooden cottage on the knoll just in front of us; the chief-justice and the puisne judge have bungalows on hills to the right and left; the attorney-general and the colonial secretary inhabit other structures of Venetian blind-work at slightly greater distances. Every house is perched for coolness on the very top of a little hill; so to get from one to another, you must ride down into a valley, and up again on the other side. Horses are, alas! indispensable conditions of existence; but, barring this one disadvantage, life moves easily and smoothly enough in these cool abodes. I cannot say we have much variety; for we spend our time mostly in calling on one another, and returning one another's calls; in dining with our neighbours, and asking our neighbours to dine with us. Still, after the heat, the dust, and the ennui of Kingston, these green hills, with their shade, their coolness, and their exquisite scenery, are certainly very refreshing. Then we can ride across to Newcastle now and again, to visit the young fellows in the cantonment, or to dine at mess, of which I have been instantly installed an honorary member. Even croquet, which forms my pet aversion at home, becomes almost endurable as a part of this lazy life. Our simplicity, indeed, is nearly as striking as our freedom. Everybody lives in a wooden house, or rather in a casing of Venetian blinds; everybody knows all about everybody else; and everybody can tell exactly what his neighbours have had for dinner, since we kill a sheep by subscrip-

tion, and divide the legs and shoulders between us according to official superiority.

For my part, being but a humble citizen, with no other handle to my name than the 'esquire' of courtesy, I was a little appalled at first by the solemn titles of all our friends. It is somewhat awful to sit down to dinner for the first time with a captain-general, a chief-justice, a director of roads, and a commander-in-chief. But the feeling soon wears off, as one begins to realise that these high-sounding functionaries are really very much like ordinary English barristers or civil servants, with modest salaries which just enable them to keep up a decent hospitality in a quiet fashion. To say the truth, the older one grows the more does one perceive that a human being remains essentially human in whatever dress you may trick him out; and that a judge without his robes is just a respectable and somewhat superannuated English gentleman, with a taste for good literature, good art, and good light wines, remarkably like yours and mine. So I find myself by no means so abashed as I at first expected by the overpowering weight of colonial titles; and I begin to perceive with how little wisdom not only the kingdoms but also the colonies of the world are governed. Nay, I am even inclined to suppose that the attorney-general is not quite so infallible upon points of law but that my modest studies for the bar may occasionally enable me to catch him out; and that the chief inspector of schools is not entirely at his ease when he endeavours to enlighten me upon the botanical peculiarities of the colony. But lest any existing high functionary of the island, into whose hands this number of 'Belgravia' may chance to fall, should suspect me of *scandalum magnatum* in defaming his personal character, I hasten to add that these reminiscences, though thrown for convenience into the present tense, really belong to the past indefinite, when the *personnel* of the government was quite different from that of the present day. Otherwise, I might be accused of thrusting myself in print into good society which would disclaim any knowledge of my existence *in propria persona*.

Nevertheless, though we idle away our time pleasantly enough, I cannot for a moment pretend that life among the Jamaican hills is really enjoyable. There are a thousand drawbacks which I can hardly set down on paper without seeming pernicketty, and which yet make one sufficiently miserable for the moment to spoil a large part of one's happiness. Even the diminutive mosquito is himself a source of constant annoyance. Ever present in the midst of every occupation, he invariably alights upon your nose at the exact moment when you are endeavouring to make a pleasing impression upon your latest acquaintance, or raises round lumps upon your

forehead when you are dressing for dinner on a most special occasion. As to ladies, he becomes the plague of their existence, blistering their arms with innumerable white spots, and making their cheeks livid on the very evening of the military ball. In short, let alone heat, negroes, and atrocious cookery, the mosquito is by himself enough to poison life in the West Indies. He is the *amari aliquid* of Lucretius, *quod in ipsis floribus anget*. Believe me, my unknown but presumably courteous reader, trite as the remark may appear to you, there is no place like home. Congratulate yourself that you live in a country where insect pests are unknown ; where the art of cookery is practised at least in a rudimentary stage ; where humanity is not all one deliquescent Niobe ; and where travelling does not necessitate the employment of a saddle-horse with advanced views upon the morality of homicide. Be content to see the Blue Mountains through the eyes of others, and I venture to predict that you will be the happier for it.

A Story of the Prince Imperial.

ABOUT fifteen years ago, when the Second Empire was in the hey-day of its prosperity, a great commotion occurred one day at the Palace of the Tuileries. The Prince Imperial was missing. His tutor, M. Monnier; his valet, Uhlmann; his equerry, M. Bachon, might have been observed tearing down the terrace which skirts the Quai du Louvre, followed by young Louis Conneau, the Prince's playmate. Young Conneau appeared ready to cry; and the three officials above-named seemed disposed to hold him responsible for the mishap which they dreaded, for every now and then they turned round gesticulating, and sharply repeated the question, 'When did you see him last?' It was about ten o'clock on a summer morning, and the public part of the Tuileries gardens was already crowded with nursemaids and children. Some other walkers were abroad too, inhaling the tonic of Parisian June air, and several of these, noticing the goings to and fro of the persons on the terrace, stopped and stared, imagining that some court-dog must have played the truant. It would have given them an electrical sensation if they could have guessed that it was the heir to the throne who was being sought for among the rhododendrons and lilac bushes. This little bit of news, retailed by them in cafés—as it would have been very speedily—would have been enough to occasion a heavy fall in rentes and to have spread a panic on the Bourse that afternoon.

The Prince's tutor, equerry, and valet knew this but too well; and so did young Conneau, whose youthful mind had long ago opened to the comprehension that his Imperial playmate was not a boy like others. Guards surrounded him; all his steps were watched; he could not wander out of the sight of those appointed to keep their eyes on him without raising an amount of fuss of which Conneau himself always suffered rather more than the Prince did. The functions of whipping-boy had happily been abolished before Louis Conneau's time; but whenever the Prince did anything amiss, it was Conneau who was held blameworthy. He was told that he ought to set a better example, that he ought not to lead His Imperial Highness astray; that he was a boy who enjoyed great honours and had consequently big duties, all of which sayings Conneau bore with an air of outward penitence but with inward mutiny. Now, this much-lectured youth happened to know that the Prince Imperial chafed considerably under the tutelage in

which he was held, and had long cherished the ambition of going forth and having a long day's spree by himself in the streets of Paris. There was a certain fried-potato stall where H.I.H. had said he should like to regale himself *incognito*, and he much wished to go and mix with the herds of boys whom he had seen streaming out of the Lycées towards four in the afternoon, and to join in some of those delightful combats which they waged among themselves with their dictionaries and satchels. Too generous to drag his comrade into a scrape, the Prince had never asked Conneau to join him in an escapade; but he had solemnly warned him that on the first occasion when he should catch M. Monnier napping, the officer on guard dozing, and the sentry at the garden-gate looking stupid on his post, he should avail himself of this combination of circumstances, and be off. Louis Conneau had treated this confidence as sacred, but he had used the voice of wisdom to persuade the Prince that there were just as good fried potatoes to be had at the Tuileries as at the corner of the Rue St.-Honoré; and that eating these delicacies with one's fingers out of a piece of greasy yellow paper constituted no such treat as H.I.H. fancied. However, the Prince seemed now to have disregarded the advice, and Conneau, harried by questions, was at last fain to own that he thought His Highness had gone out for a bit of fun.

'Fun!' yelled M. Monnier, lifting his arms in desperation; 'does he think it's fun to make us run about after him in this fashion! Where has he gone now? Tell us at once if you know.'

'Perhaps he has gone to buy two sous' worth of potatoes,' suggested young Conneau timidly. It was a hazardous statement to make, for the three officials glared at him, as if they thought a jest would be most unseasonable at such a moment.

'Potatoes!' echoed the erudite M. Monnier. 'Why, he only breakfasted an hour ago.'

'Boys are often ready for two breakfasts,' remarked M. Bachon, the equerry, luminously.

'That's not the question,' cried the tutor, retracing his steps, and walking rapidly back towards the palace. 'You must lead us to the potato-shop, Conneau, if you know where it is. Quick! come, now, I take it for granted you are not misleading us.'

'I can't affirm he has gone for potatoes,' whined Conneau, feeling the conjuncture was serious. 'Perhaps he has gone to have a fight with the Lycée boys.'

'Mein Gott! a fight mit *vauriens*!' exclaimed Uhlmann, his honest Alsatian face turning to the colour of beetroot.

'Not a word more,' gasped M. Monnier, for they were nearing a sentry, and observed the captain of the guard standing on the

accustomed to horse-flesh from my youth up. But somehow the equine race has never taken kindly to me. There are some people who can handle bees and wasps with impunity—Sir John Lubbock has even taken out a wasp to dinner in his waistcoat-pocket—while there are other persons who cannot safely come within five hundred yards of a hive, so strongly does the intelligent bee object to their personal appearance and peculiarities. It is the same as regards the relations subsisting between myself and the entire community of horses. No horse will endure my presence for a moment. Some of them throw me over their heads; some of them sit down with me and attempt to roll me like a pancake; some of them only refuse to budge an inch so long as I remain in the saddle; but one and all regard me as a natural enemy, to be thwarted and humiliated by every means in their power. I regret the situation, but I am compelled to accept it. All attempts at conciliation have failed; and I now sadly recognise the fact that open war exists between us.

On the present occasion, however, I must meet my enemy face to face, and conquer him. It is impossible for a white man to walk five miles in length and four thousand feet in height under this blazing sky; so I reluctantly place myself across the broad ribs of a sturdy hill pony, and commence the ascent. Fortunately the Jamaican pony is not a savage specimen of his race. Docile, sure-footed, and by no means given to bolting, the only unpleasant trick in which he indulges is a habit of jerking his rider out of the saddle and down a precipice whenever he happens to be passing a peculiarly deep and dangerous gully. This little trait in his character, however, may be effectually suppressed by holding a tight rein as you go down hill, and giving him his head as you go up. Indeed, the pony only objects to any reversal of this his accustomed mode of procedure. So I manage to get up the hill with as little discomfort as any man can reasonably expect when he rides on the back of a hostile beast whose fixed desire is the sudden and violent termination of his earthly career.

As to my portmanteau, that comes after me by what may be called 'the luggage-van of the country,'—in other words, on a negro's head. Half-a-dozen black men, attired in a graceful costume of sackcloth, were lying in the soft dust by the roadside as I dismounted from the buggy at Gordon Town. The proprietor of the livery-stable informs me that one of these gentlemen would perhaps be willing to carry up my portmanteau for a fitting remuneration. So I ask them if any fellow wants to earn a dollar. The offer is met by a contemptuous silence. I make it a dollar and a quarter. A few negroes open their eyes sleepily and look

inquiringly at one another ; so I go on rising, a shilling at a time, till I reach two dollars. At last the elder men begin to expostulate with the younger. The boccra gentleman wants his bag carried ; isn't any nigger—*nagur* they call it—going to help him ? Nobody responds. Finally, a young man thinks his wife would take it ; for himself, he seems far too lordly to undertake the task. So the wife is hunted up and brought forward—a comely, strapping negress, with a red bandanna tied not ungracefully round her head, and a short petticoat which shows a pair of stalwart ankles and feet, innocent of shoe or stocking, underneath. Clemmy—her full name is Clementina Angelica—takes up my somewhat ponderous portmanteau as if it were a feather, poises it lightly upon her head, now deprived of its bandanna, and stalks forward on the road with an easy grace, straight as an arrow and strong as a horse. These negresses have always splendid upright figures, because they are accustomed to carry pails of water and other heavy weights upon their heads from childhood upward ; and the merest country wench, going to market with a basket of yams and mangoes on her woolly cranium, marches with a quiet dignity and ease which few of our European great ladies could ever acquire.

We make a queer solitary procession up the lonely mountain path, Clemmy and I : myself, riding first, with white umbrella opened over my head, urging the not unwilling pony to mount a specially steep incline : Clemmy, toiling behind, with the portmanteau poised easily on her plaited hair, her arms free and disengaged, and a leafy branch in one hand employed in encouraging the pony from time to time by a gentle admonishment *a tergo*. Clemmy is very communicative, not to say boisterous. The distance that separates servants and masters in Europe is little felt in tropical countries, because the separation is too vast to be bridged over. We dislike familiarity from our white inferiors because we feel the barrier is too artificial to bear trifling with : but we rather encourage it in negroes because we know nothing can ever make them forget the gulf that yawns between us. So Clemmy gives me much information as we go regarding her own domestic arrangements and her five children ; criticises my style of horsemanship in a manner which I cannot truthfully describe as flattering ; guffaws loudly with a prodigious display of white teeth whenever I address her ; and objurgates the pony in terms of execration which I should feel under other circumstances as eminently unsuited to feminine lips. These lips, however, are so *very* thick that the incongruity does not strike one as remarkable. Unfortunately, we experience some difficulty in making ourselves mutually

their way. Damp and wretched, they trudged off on their unpromising errand, little Conneau having to run to keep pace with them; the two detectives, who had never lost sight of them, followed at a respectful distance behind. By the time they reached the Hôtel de Ville they were dripping sops; and upon arriving at the college they were steaming from heat and moisture like boiled vegetables. Unhappily, their perseverance was not to be rewarded, for on looking up and down the street, where the rain was falling in torrents, they saw nothing resembling a Prince nor even a shabby Radical. There were men with bad hats enough, but they were ordinary folks hurrying through their business in the rain, and offering nothing suspicious to the eye of the beholder. It had been the practice of M. Monnier to improve the shining hours which he spent with his Imperial pupil by taking the casual objects and incidents of life as texts for instructive sermons. He had already made mental note of the fact that if he recovered his pupil safe and sound he would discourse to him about potatoes, scalding grease, Radicals, and the uses to which a hat may be put when the nap is gone: but he now added to his mental notes that constriction of the throat which is a symptom of great fear, and from which he began to suffer acutely at that moment. He remarked also how his friend Bachon and the valet Uhlmann were marking time nervously on the pavement, as if they too saw no pleasing vista opening before them; but this interesting observation did not cloak from him the necessity of returning to the Tuileries without further delay. So a cab was hailed, and the whole dismal party got into it. Louis Conneau, who had borne up bravely till then, began to cry, by doing which he rendered great service to the three men, who only wanted such an excuse to upbraid him all three together, and vow that the whole thing was his fault.

Let us tread lightly over the scene that took place at the Tuileries when it was disclosed to Napoleon III. and the Empress that their son had taken what the French figuratively call the key of the fields, and had last been seen in the company of a tatterdemalion quill-driver. How aides-de-camp rushed about and how maids of honour fainted; how secretaries of State were sent for, and arrived with their hair dishevelled; how the Prefect of Police drove to and fro about the city, giving orders and cross-orders; and how, during five mortal hours, the entire police of the best policed city in the world left off hunting rogues to chase their Imperial master's heir—all these things will be recorded some day when the Court history of the Second Empire gets written. Enough to say here that towards six in the evening, when the confusion in

the palace was at its height, a rather dusty and somewhat abashed little boy was seen parleying with the sentry who mounted guard under the Triumphal arch of the Carrousel.

'Why, it's he!' screamed M. Monnier, who witnessed the sight from his window; and he would have dashed out of the room: but he was practically in the custody of two officers of the guards who courteously restrained him. The next moment, however, shouts of joy, greetings, &c., mingled with reproaches, could be heard in the passage outside, and M. Monnier knew that his pupil had come home safe and sound. Etiquette prevented the tutor from hastening into the Emperor's presence unbidden; but he was soon summoned, and, entering the Empress's drawing-room, found Her Majesty laughing as she dried her eyes, while the Emperor and half a dozen court ladies surrounded the Prince Imperial, with amused, half-wondering smiles, as if he were a boy of some strange breed, telling marvellous things. In sooth, the lad was seated on a footstool, and, having made his peace with his parents for his truancy, was complacently relating his adventures. On seeing his tutor, he stood up and hung his head, as if ashamed, for form's sake.

'Ah, Louis, you will have to beg M. Monnier's pardon, for you put him in great anxiety,' said the Emperor. 'Your punishment shall be to write out an account for him of all you've been doing.'

'I can't remember every little thing, you know,' said the Prince, not much relishing the prospective task.

M. Monnier made a mental note for a lecture on mnemonics, but for the present he said, 'Well, monseigneur, do you at least know who your companion was?'

'Oh, he was a very nice person,' exclaimed the Prince. 'When it rained, he took me into his house and showed me a number of odd things. He seems to be a poor man, but he has seen a great number of countries and spent many years in Cayenne. Where is Cayenne, papa?'

And the Prince looked up artlessly at the Emperor, who winced.

A few weeks later one of those political plots which used always to be breaking out in Paris under the Empire (perhaps because the police had some interest in their frequency) brought about a dozen so-called revolutionists into the meshes of the Rue de Jérusalem. Among them was a poor wight, a journalist, named Victor Marchy, who had but lately returned from a ten years' captivity at Cayenne, whence he had escaped. Lying in prison, this unfortunate fellow was told one day that papers had been found in his lodgings which implicated him in a plot against the Emperor's life.

‘Ah pour ça non!’ exclaimed Marchy. ‘J’en appelle au Prince Impérial que je ne suis pas un assassin!’

‘Why to the Prince Imperial, who is but a child?’ asked the juge d’instruction, astonished.

‘Take him my photograph,’ answered Victor Marchy.

The prisoner’s photograph was submitted to the Prince Imperial, who recognised it as that of ‘the shabby Radical with the bad hat’ in whose company he had spent his truant day. Wherefore the Emperor, as he himself examined the portrait, said, with some emotion:

‘This man held my boy’s life in his hands during a whole day; he can be no enemy of mine!’

And he signed Victor Marchy’s pardon.

MARK HOPE.

Queen of the Meadow.

BY CHARLES GIBBON.

(The right of translation is reserved.)

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE CRISIS.

THERE was a blunder—a terrible blunder she knew it to be: one that they both might have to lament throughout their lives. She felt this in a vague, bewildered sort of way, and she was unable to comprehend exactly how it had come about. Her own hesitation had had something to do with it, no doubt; and Walton, too, had his share in building the wall which had risen between them. Now she wanted to break through the wall by main force, and was ready to save Michael from his despairing mood by boldly telling him that—

No: the last word had been spoken between them on *that* subject, and she would never refer to it again. She had almost flung herself into his arms, and—he had repulsed her. She was sorry; and yet, inconsistently, she was glad to be still free, and to feel that now she might speak to him as to a loving brother about everything that concerned her life. She would even ask him to advise her about accepting or rejecting Walton, notwithstanding his appeal, or command, that she should not consult him on such a question.

But was that fair? With a woman's perversity, she tried to reason herself into the belief that it was quite fair; and only the legitimate outcome of the understanding at which they had arrived. Malice? No—at least, she did not mean it to be so; but he was so dogged, and she was so perplexed by her position: she owed him some unknown duty, and he would not help her to the knowledge of what it was; and as he drew coldly away from her, she became conscious of the important part which he played in the affairs of her life.

She had a terror of seeing Walton that evening; and when she got home, she went straight to her own room, begging Sarah to say, if any one called, that she was not well. Sarah promised that she should not be disturbed. Throughout the day—indeed, throughout the sad week—Sarah had been intently useful, so silent that nobody appeared to observe her presence. And yet she was always

just in the place where something was wanted, always quiet and ready; and everything she touched seemed to fulfil its purpose in the most perfect manner.

Walton came, as Polly had feared—as Sarah had hoped; and Sarah met him at the door. He did not like that, but he was prepared to make the best of it, and so, complacently enough:

‘I suppose you are both tired after all the work you have had to do. It is natural that She should feel it more than you, because poor old Hazell was a sort of father to her. He was a first-rate old fellow.’

‘Yes,’ answered Sarah slowly, and trying to catch his eyes, which shifted from one object to another, without once looking at her; ‘we are both tired, and my cousin is so much upset that she has been obliged to go to her room to rest. But come in.’

He followed, but the invitation did not give him pleasure; for there was something in Sarah’s manner which recalled that day he had met her at the ford. Still, there was this consolation—Polly *might* come down stairs again when she knew that he was in the parlour.

Sarah placed a chair for him, but she remained standing, her back towards the window, so that her face was in deep shadow. He did not like this arrangement either, and he observed that her fingers moved nervously, although the hands were clasped. She was as great a puzzle to him as ever, but at present he really felt sorry to see her agitation.

‘What the deuce can it be?’ he was saying to himself, and then to her: ‘you seem to be very fatigued with all you have had to do. I wish I could have done something to relieve you; but you see I couldn’t do it under the circumstances. I hope Polly is not so much cut up as you seem to be.’

He now always spoke of the mistress of the Meadow as ‘Polly.’

Sarah’s fingers moved more nervously than before; he saw that, although he could not see the expression of her face.

‘You remember the packet I gave you?’

‘Of course; I have it in my desk,’ he answered, thinking it curious that her manner should have reminded him of the meeting at the ford when he was speaking to her at the door, and that she should directly refer to it.

‘Have you opened it?’

‘Certainly not. You told me not to do so until something extraordinary happened to you. I take it to be your will, or something of that sort; and so I locked it up, to be opened when required. . . . But what is the matter with you, that you speak so *strangely*?’

Instead of answering his question, she went off to an entirely different subject, and his feeling of uneasiness at her strange conduct not only increased but became decidedly uncomfortable, and he would have been glad to have been able to put on his hat and leave the house, notwithstanding his desire to see Polly.

'You know that—She upstairs—my cousin, has lost her fortune?

The fingers still worked nervously, but the voice was subdued and almost firm: it was that of one who, suffering, has a right to cross-examine the person who has caused the suffering.

Walton was 'cute' about horses, and he imagined himself to be as well versed in women's ways as any man alive; but Sarah bewildered him. 'What is she driving at now?' he was asking himself. To her question he replied:

'Yes, I know it. Young Hazell says it's untrue, but I know what he means.'

'And still you would marry her?'

The words were spoken in a subdued tone, but there was agony in it. He felt irritated, and rose to his feet.

'If she hadn't a brass farthing, I would marry her to-morrow.'

There was a sob, instantly checked: he approached to take her hand, but she drew back; and as she moved, the light for an instant fell on her eyes, and he saw that they were full of tears. That sight touched him, and made him suffer keenly for the moment. If she would have allowed him, he would have taken her in his arms, and said, 'For God's sake, forgive me; I cannot help myself. I know you have thought of me—but I cannot help myself!' And with that pleading he might have been forgiven. But she held up her hands, so that he dared not come near her. Then she went off upon another tack—still so calmly!

'Can you believe it possible for a woman to love a man who has deceived her—a man who has led her to believe that he loved her and then suddenly turned to another?'

'I don't know,' he said, growing sulky, for her quiet passion disturbed his conscience, and her meaning was too plain for him to affect to misunderstand it.

There was another sob, this time more distinct and more like the wail of a stricken heart than the one before, and as she seemed to stagger, Walton hastily caught her arm. She flung his hand off as if it had been a reptile that had touched her.

'You can open the packet to-morrow,' she said, with a strange tremor in her voice. 'Good-night.'

He wanted very much to see Polly, but the scene which had just taken place had upset him, and the dismissal was so decided that he, too, said 'Good-night' at once.

Sarah, from the window, watched him going down the path to the gate, saw the gate close, and Walton disappear amidst the hedges. Then there was one great heart-broken sob, and she sat down in a chair and cried. She had hoped against reason, but reason at last convinced her that her hope was in vain.

On the following morning Polly found a letter on her dressing-table, and she opened it at once :—

‘Good-bye. Walton is worthy of you. I thought for a long time that he only sought you because of your fortune. I was mistaken, and I am glad to have been mistaken, although it costs me much more than you can even guess. I loved him—I love him *even* now when I know that all his thoughts are given to you—not for your fortune, remember that, but for yourself. I am going away; and I hope you will do me the kindness of not attempting to follow me. Dear Polly, forgive me for giving you this pain in telling you my secret. Perhaps it would have been better to have been silent altogether, especially to you: but in my selfishness—it may be my vindictiveness, I cannot tell—I could not help letting you know the reason why I have so suddenly left the house. I do wish you to be happy, but I could not stay at the Meadow and see you *his* wife.

‘Have no fear about me; I am going to try to cure myself of many evil thoughts by hard work. By-and-by—a long time hence—when you are comfortably settled with your husband, I may come to see you; but that will only be when I am able to say that my heart is free from envy, and that things are better as they are. I cannot help writing this; but I implore you not to allow it to influence your decision in any way.

‘Ever your affectionate cousin,

‘SARAH.’

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A MISSION.

POLLY held the letter in her hand, staring at its strange words, and wondering at the revelation they conveyed. She had been wrong all the time, and *might* have made a sacrifice of herself to no purpose—it was Walton and not Michael whom Sarah loved!

Instead of going into a wild state of excitement, she laughed until the tears came into her eyes, first at her own blindness, and next at Sarah’s theatrical despair. At the same time she determined to save her silly cousin from the consequences of this mad freak, by silence, and by bringing her back as quickly as possible. The

whole affair was so ridiculous, and the means of setting it right had been so simple, that she could not help laughing.

But presently, as the position revealed itself in all its details, she became serious. Silence on her part was easy; but she could not hush the tongues of the servants without telling them a falsehood, and she did not like that. Then, how to bring Sarah back was a problem not easily solved, since she had no clue to her whereabouts. Of course, London would be the place she would go to, but finding a needle in a haystack is rather difficult, and it would be quite as difficult to find the runaway in the metropolis. She did not like to ask Michael to come to her aid at this moment, because his own trouble was so great, and because of some hesitation within herself for which she could find no adequate reason.

She sent for Walton. He was the person who was, next to herself, most concerned in the fugitive, and he was the person to assist in discovering her.

Walton came, flushed with joy by the message, and believing that at last his suit was to gain the day. She would be shy and mirthful, or she would be brave and frank and say 'Yes' at once. As he rode along towards the Meadow, his heart was light and his mind full of happy visions. He was singing a song of triumph to himself, for she had sent for him, and it could only be with one object—to tell him that she yielded at last. When he received the message, he said nothing to the 'Sistern.' He started at once, and was at the Meadow as soon as the messenger.

Polly was in the dairy. In his impatience, he would not wait for her to come to him; he walked through the kitchen and into the place where he found her with one of the tidy maidens busy taking butter out of a churn. She had a large white apron on, and was evidently intent upon her work, for she did not at first observe him as he stood in the doorway. It had been Sarah's task to attend to the dairy, but as she had gone, and as Polly felt the necessity of doing something to keep away unpleasant reflections, she went to the work herself.

Her sleeves were tucked up, and Walton had an opportunity of admiring the white and shapely arms. He noted, too, that she was somewhat pale, and her expression was decidedly much more grave than he had ever seen it before. He was admiring the grace of her movements, and making unfair comparisons between her activity and that of the 'Sistern;' he was even calculating the value she would be as a wife. Under her care the Abbey Farm would return three times as much as it did at present, and he would be able to enjoy himself with an easy conscience—to say nothing of the ease

with which he could pension the 'Sistern' and his mother. That was a satisfaction, and he had no doubt that it was all to be arranged just as he desired. Presently she saw him.

'You have come quickly,' she said, as she proceeded to squeeze the milk out of a lump of butter she had just taken from the churn. 'I can't shake hands with you, but I shall be ready to speak to you in a minute. You can wait for me in the parlour.'

There was something strange in her manner, something much more formal than usual; but although he observed this, he was too elated to pay any heed to it.

'I would rather stay here, if you please, until you are quite ready; but don't hurry, for I like to see you at work. I thought your cousin did all this.'

'Yes, but she has been obliged to go away for a few days, and I am taking her place.'

The dryness with which she spoke was anything but what he had expected when she had summoned him, as he had hoped, to fix their wedding-day.

'I did not think she was one who would take a holiday in the middle of harvest. She was always so earnest about everything. I used to think sometimes that she was uncomfortably earnest.'

'She could not help it, and she did such good work here that I shall be sorry when some sensible man takes her away from me.'

'Is there any likelihood of that?' asked Walton, with a laugh. 'I fancy she is so serious, that the sensible man you are afraid of, would be afraid to approach her.'

'Not at all; he would be only too pleased to find a good and useful wife,—at least, he should be.'

Polly had finished squeezing the butter, washed her hands, and, after giving some directions to her attendant, led Walton into the parlour. Her manner was strange, although not unkindly. She looked somewhat paler than she had appeared in the dairy, where her activity had maintained some colour in her cheeks. She took off her big apron and threw it aside: that act alone sufficed to indicate the agitation she was suffering, for she was always most particular in putting things away in their proper places at once. It was a maxim of hers, 'It is easier to put a thing in its place now than by-and-by,' and all her people had been taught to respect her views on that subject. But she had been thinking about Sarah and about Michael, and the more she thought, the more troubled she had become in regard to her own conduct.

'You must have thought it strange, Mr. Walton, that I should have taken the liberty of sending for you,' she began, with just the least sign of nervousness, her eyes turned to the floor, and not,

as was her custom, fixed upon the face of the person to whom she spoke.

‘I was too glad that you had sent for me, to think whether it was strange or not. I took it as a sign that you trusted me, and that you were to give me the answer I crave for.’

‘No: it was because I wanted you to do something—not for me, but for somebody else, although I shall feel myself under an obligation if you will undertake it.’

‘All right; if it be anything that will please you, tell me at once, that I may hasten to do it. Whatever you want done I shall try to do, no matter who it is for.’

‘I want you to find her.’

And she placed Sarah’s letter in his hand.

It was droll, this way of asking him to render her a service. He opened the letter, and the first sentences brought the blood up, flushing his brow. Polly watched him as he read, and when he had done she met the anxious eyes he lifted to her with a kindness which invited confidence. But he had no confidence to impart: whatever he had done to make Sarah believe that he loved her, he was quite unconscious of it; he had acted in the same way with a dozen girls, and had never associated the idea of marriage with what he considered a simple flirtation. But he could see that Polly did not regard the matter in the same way.

‘I don’t understand it,’ he said awkwardly; ‘she is very kind in the way she speaks about me—kinder than I deserve, I dare say but you know it’s disagreeable, to say the least, to feel that I am the cause of driving her away from a comfortable home. I was always fond of her—although it was not the same kind of feeling as with you. I would be glad to do anything I could for her.’

‘Then find her, and bring her home,’ answered Polly decisively.

‘And then, when she is brought home—what will you say to me?’ he asked earnestly.

‘I shall say I am grateful to you.’

‘No more than that?’

‘What more could I say?’

‘That you will be my wife.’

With a sudden impulsive movement as he spoke, he grasped both her arms, and he was going to embrace her. She did not struggle, but there was a quiet movement of the head backwards and an expression of surprise in her eyes, which checked him more effectually than the most forcible resistance could have done. He released her arms, and withdrew a pace with head bowed. He had always been so bold in his wooing before, that Polly was amazed

by the submission he paid to a mere glance and by the dejection be displayed. All the dash and freedom of his spirit seemed to have abandoned him, and for the moment he stood like a shame-faced schoolboy. Then lifting his head, the old daring spirit was in his eyes, and she remaining silent, he spoke :

‘You won’t answer? very well, I shall take your silence to mean, if not consent, at least that I may still hope.’

She clasped her hands behind her and there was an expression of pain on her now pale face.

‘I am asking you to do me a service, Mr. Walton, and I would be glad if I could do anything that would please you. But in this matter I think the kindest thing I can do is to tell you at once you are not even to hope—for I shall never marry you.’

‘This is Sarah’s doings,’ he said bitterly.

‘No, it has nothing to do with her.’

‘Then you have accepted Hazell: I thought your good-nature would yield to him just because of his trouble.’

Her eyes were bent on the floor as she replied :

‘No . . . he has refused to take me.’

And then there was a long breath drawn, like a sob, as she made that humiliating confession.

‘What!’ exclaimed Walton, utterly astounded and full of chagrin, for this was a state of affairs quite incomprehensible to him. ‘He refused you?’

‘Yes;’ and her eyes were still bent on the floor, whilst the colour returned to her cheeks.

‘Upon my soul, that is more than I can make out. But I see that I am troubling you, and I don’t want to do that. He is a confounded idiot, or else he has been humbugging you and me. There, I won’t say another word—but I cannot say that I am sorry, for it leaves me another chance.’

‘Don’t think that, I implore you, for I have quite made up my mind.’

‘To what?’

‘Never to marry!’

Walton gave forth a hearty laugh, and she looked up in surprise.

‘I’ll trust your youth and common sense to overcome that resolution,’ he said, as light-heartedly as ever.

‘You will be mistaken, then.’

‘We shall see. I was thinking of the mill-pond a minute ago, but I am thinking now of the Polly I shall see six months hence. . . . Don’t speak: I am off at once to do what you want. I shall soon bring Sarah back, and then—’



He would not wait for her to assure him again that he was mistaken, but hurried off with hope stronger than ever in his breast.

CHAPTER XL.

HOT WATER.

HE rode home at full gallop. There was to his ears a jubilant sound even in the clatter of Jim's hoofs, and he seemed to know that his master was merry. So, it was all off with Hazell, and now he had the course to himself, and it would be simply a walk over: in other words, he would only have to wait a few months, and then he would be a happy man. He laughed again and again at the assertion that she would never marry. He understood that sort of thing, and was quite confident of the result; indeed, according to his reckoning the very fact of her saying so was in his favour.

'You can always catch a widow with the tears in her eyes!' he said.

During the whole time he was in the saddle he did not give a thought to the special mission he had undertaken, and to prepare for which he was hastening home. It was 'Polly is mine, Polly is mine—she is free, she is free—and Polly is mine.' That was the glad song his mind sang, and if he had been a parrot he could not have been more monotonous in the repetition of the same words. But they were not monotonous to him. He just revelled in them, and cared for no other thought. He gave his horse to one of the men, and he was brought back to the commonplace world by the servant who opened the door for him.

'Please, sir, the missus and the young ladies have been waiting lunch for you for a hour.'

'By Jove! I forgot; I had better have something to eat, as I want to catch the four o'clock train for London.'

'What!' exclaimed a sharp voice; 'going to London again?'

It was the 'Angel' who was standing at the entrance to the dining-room. He felt that he was caught, and said disagreeable things to himself about his own stupidity. But he answered coolly:

'Yes; I have business to do which cannot be delayed; and so, if you can be obliging for once in a way, pack my portmanteau, and help me to be off in time.'

'You have been to the Meadow again, and it is on account of that woman you are going to London when you are so much wanted at home, and we cannot do without you.'

Walton was in such good-humour with his prospects that, instead of resenting the harsh and vulgar way in which Polly had been referred to, he resumed the same bantering manner in which he usually spoke to the 'Sistern.'

'Praise undeserved is satire in disguise,' he said, bowing low. 'Wanted at home always means that I am required to entertain some of your friends: but to be of so much importance as to be indispensable, must mean that you require me to ask some poor devil his intentions on your own account or on that of the others. All right, I'll play the part of the judicious brother on my return. At present I'm hungry, and I must catch that train.'

'You will find that the subject is not such an agreeable one as you have imagined,' she answered, cheeks flushed and anger in her eyes, as they entered the dining-room together.

'Well, we can talk of it whilst I am feeding,' and he took his place at the head of the table. 'You have said grace, I suppose, Carry, and I needn't wait for that.'

As he was cutting a slice of beef, he observed that his mother, whilst she was eating heartily, showed signs of much distress; but as these signs appeared on the most trivial occasions, they did not disturb him. To prevent any reference to the famous Alderman, and to make matters pleasant for himself, he determined to have conversation of some sort.

'How did you girls know I had gone to the Meadow?' he asked with his mouth full.

'I knew the lad who came for you,' answered Miss Walton, who had resumed her place.

'And she told us all,' chimed Carry, 'and it's very foolish of you when you know that she hasn't a penny.'

'And you haven't much more,' added Alice, severely.

The mother gulped down a piece of grouse and groaned.

'Oh, if my poor dear father, Alderman—'

'Have a glass of sherry, mother; you don't seem to be well.'

'How can I be well with such dreadful goings-on, and expecting every day to be turned out of our ancient home? Oh, if my—'

'Here you are, mother, drink it up—it will do you good.'

He had risen on the first reference to his grandfather, and gone to fill his mother's glass. He hated that Alderman, who was always held up to him as such a model of virtue, prudence, and magnanimity. As he looked round the table he was troubled by which appeared on all the faces. His coded, always ready to cry out that the end if a pin scratched her, and to call

upon the shade of the great Alderman for protection, he did not mind. But Carry was light-hearted, taking things with good will just as they turned up, and she was sad; Alice was clear-headed, selfish, and desirous of making the most she could out of her position, and she was evidently depressed. That was a bad sign.

Further, Walton was obliged to admit to himself that the Angel, with all her faults, possessed a good deal of common sense—a great deal more than he did, he always owned; and although she presented gloomy views of the future to him for her own purposes, she always endeavoured to make things look quite *couleur de rose* to others—and now she, too, was clearly in a state of distress.

But he had his suspicions that all this might be no more than clever acting in order to coerce him into submitting to their wishes. He was not to be taken in with chaff; and so, resuming his seat:

‘I think you are four of the glummiest-looking women I have ever seen. Is it new bonnets or autumn dresses that are troubling you? I’ll bring you full accounts of the latest fashions from Paris, and you ought to be grateful to me for that—indeed, you ought to hasten my departure on purpose.’

Miss Walton had wished to defer her explanation until after luncheon, but she was so much irritated by his reckless manner, that she could contain herself no longer.

‘I have no doubt the matter will appear to you quite as simple as the question of new bonnets and autumn dresses,’ she said, with a gleam of malicious triumph in her eyes; ‘and it will probably expedite your marriage with the penniless tenant of the Meadow—’

‘That will be good news,’ he interrupted cheerfully.

‘Mr. Smith has written,’ she went on with forced calmness, and unheeding the interruption—‘Mr. Smith has written to say that the mortgage on the land must be paid off in six months, or the mortgagee will close—I am quoting from his letter, which you will find on the table in your room.’

He was raising a glass of sherry to his lips as she spoke: the hand stopped, poised in air, and it seemed as if he were about to put the glass down, so great was the shock which the news gave him. But, no, hang it, he was not going to give in before the ‘Sistern.’ He of course had spent a great deal more than he ought to have done—or rather, lost it; but he was perfectly satisfied that if the ‘Sistern’ had been less extravagant on their side, the difficulties of the household might have been considerably smaller than they were at present. Although he made no accusation to this effect, it soothed his conscience to think that they had had

their full share in bringing about the general impecuniosity of the family.

‘Whose mortgage is it?’ he inquired, coolly proceeding with his lunch.

‘Bullock’s—I warned you at the first that he would come upon you for the money. He wants the land, and he has waited for this opportunity. He knows he has a chance now, for everybody is speaking of your neglect of the estate’ (she never would say ‘the farm’) ‘and of the heavy losses you have had in betting on horseraces.’

Mrs. Walton groaned, and was again about to refer to the illustrious Alderman, when Walton hastily interrupted her.

‘Bullock may wish for it, but he won’t get it. Why, it’s only three thousand pounds!’ he went on, with the lordly air of a man who considers such a sum a mere trifle. ‘Don’t disturb yourself, mother; we have got six months before us; the land has been improved, and is now worth five times Bullock’s amount, so that I can easily get the money.’

They were all astounded by the light way in which he received news that had caused them so much consternation. If he had found the secret of the philosopher’s stone, he could not have appeared more indifferent to this threatened calamity. Miss Walton was the only one who dared to deal with him, and she spoke sternly.

‘You were always reckless; but you have become so very reckless since you became acquainted with—’ (she was going to say ‘that person,’ but she altered the phrase) ‘with old Holt’s daughter, that I think you are bent on going to the dogs altogether.’

‘We shall go in company,’ he retorted cheerfully; and then with some sign of impatience, if not of seriousness: ‘But what is the use of all this fuss? I tell you the matter can be arranged without trouble. More than that, Harris tells me that the crops this year are very good, and that unless there is some extraordinary change in the weather he will get them in safely and in first-rate condition. What more do you want? I am determined this time to retrench, and I expect you all to do the same. Then, in a year or two, we shall be able to clear off our debts and live happy ever after, as the story-books say. Now, mother, don’t fret more than you can help; there is nothing to be alarmed about.’

‘Oh, if my poor dear—’

‘All right, mother, I’ll see you before I start.’

And he ran away from the ghost of the Alderman which was rising again to rebuke him.

CHAPTER XLI.

A LAST APPEAL.

HE went to his own room, and lit his pipe : he puffed vigorously, seeking consolation, for he was not not so self-assured as he had shown himself in 'the bosom of his family.' Still, he was not depressed : that mortgage business was a nuisance ; but he knew that the land was worth at least triple the amount (he had of course exaggerated when he had said five times) borrowed, and he had no doubt that he would readily find some one to advance a larger sum than he had to pay. All the same, it was a troublesome affair to have to look after at present when he had to conquer Polly by finding Sarah.

The latter name recalled his mind to the task he had undertaken ; and at the same time he remembered the packet Sarah had given him that day at the ford, and her direction that he might open it whenever anything extraordinary befell her.

Well, this was surely the time. He was smoking fast and furious, as he went over to an old cabinet, for, in spite of his contempt for all superstition, he had a superstitious dread of that packet, and he was somewhat nervous as he took it out from a secret drawer.

He returned to his chair by the window, and placed the packet on the table beside him ; he felt a reluctance to open it at once, and he smoked furiously still. At last he broke the seal, and took from the envelope all the promissory notes he had given to Hodsoll, Sarah's father : a few of them were for lost bets, but the greater part were for money advanced, and the total amount was nearly nine hundred pounds.

'Oh, damn it!' was the exclamation with which he expressed his shame and remorse, as, resting his elbow on his knee, he covered his face with his hand to shut out of sight those proofs of the recklessness of which his sister had accused him a few minutes ago. He felt that it was something worse—it was dishonour.

Now he understood the letter which Polly had shown him, and Sarah's strange manner at the ford : this was her parting gift to him, because she loved him ! At that moment he felt himself to be unworthy of any honest woman's love. But he had thought of that debt more frequently than of any other, and, although Sarah had been silent regarding it, he had always looked forward to the day when he should be able to hand her the amount and give her grateful thanks for her extraordinary forbearance. Now he understood the reason of the forbearance, and the shame which

he felt in being under such an obligation to one whom he had unconsciously deceived was intolerable. He was honestly convinced that he had said and done nothing to give her reason to believe that he wanted to marry her. That was a coarse way of putting it, but that was evidently the way in which she had regarded the attentions he had paid her during the time he had been visiting her father.

Under ordinary circumstances he would have simply laughed at a girl who had made such a mistake, but with this parting gift before him he felt miserable. He was wondering what she could mean by running away from the place; but he gave her credit for too much sense to do anything stupid: she certainly was not one of those weak persons who seek relief to themselves and revenge upon those who have annoyed them by attempting suicide.

He would find her, and he would bring her back to the Meadow, if he had to go round the whole world and spend every penny he possessed.

Miss Walton had glided into the room so stealthily that he had not heard her, and he almost jumped from his chair at the sound of her voice.

'You don't seem to take it so coolly as you pretended to do downstairs,' she said, mistaking the cause of his agitation. 'You have discovered that three thousand pounds cannot be picked up so easily as you tried to make mother and the rest of us believe.'

Brother and sister were both very pale. He gathered up the contents of Sarah's packet and replaced them in the envelope, the inscription on which was now plain to him; this was her marriage portion: she was to give it to him if he married her, and if not she was to try to recover it. Well, she had given it to him when she knew that he was not to marry her—but she should have the money, no matter what he might have to sacrifice to obtain it. And poor girl, at present she might be in sore need of it. He felt a tenderness towards her for which he could not account; he wondered if it were possible to be loyally in love with two women at the same time—the one in retrospect and gratitude for past happiness, the other in the present. But where was he to raise the money at once?

These thoughts flashed through his mind whilst his sister was speaking; and in his shame he answered her with a gentleness which startled her: he had not spoken to her so kindly since the time when she had been ill and not expected to live. That was long ago.

'You don't understand, Lizzie,' he said, using the pet name for the first time during the last year,—and that alone would have

impressed her, even if his changed tone and manner had not. 'I still think that we can settle Bullock's business without difficulty, and I am not concerned about it at present. But there is another matter which troubles me very much—I shall perhaps explain it to you some day. Just now you could not help me if you were willing.'

All his sauciness, his audacity, and his chaffing were gone; he appeared to have received some blow which had crushed his spirit and improved his nature. Her heart was touched; the stern and cold expression with which she had entered, vanished from her face, and the astonishment at the change in him kept her silent for a moment. Then she advanced towards him softly, and laid her hand on his shoulder.

'Is it money, Tom?' she asked in a subdued tone—a tone so unusual with her when she addressed him that he looked up in surprise. He was in sore need of sympathy just then; and in moments of remorse one is glad to hear a kindly word spoken by anybody—even by a person who is disagreeable to us in general.

'It is partly that,' he replied, somewhat awkwardly, 'but there are circumstances connected with it which make it painful.'

'What are they?'

'I cannot tell you now,' he said, rising and placing the packet in his pocket.

'How much is it?'

'Nearly a thousand.'

Her thin lips closed tightly, and he was conscious of the start of dismay with which she received the intelligence.

'And when must it be paid?'

'At once—it is a debt of honour, and I shall pay it off at once if everything else should go to the devil. It is due to a woman.'

'Oh, Tom!' she cried, stepping back from him.

'I ought to say it is due to her because I borrowed it from her father, who is dead, and she is now in difficulties.'

'Who is she?'

'I said that I would tell you all about it some other time—but I can't at this minute. Now, Lizzie, don't worry me. I feel it badly enough in myself.'

'If you are to pay it at once, where are you to get the money?' she asked quietly. At last she had got him into a corner; but she seemed disposed to use her advantage with less tyranny than he would have expected.

'Heaven knows, and maybe you do,' he answered bitterly; 'but I don't. I have been trying for the last quarter of an hour to make out how and where I could get it immediately, but I have

not been able to think of any one likely to risk lending me that sum at a moment's notice.'

'I can tell you!'

He had been gazing vacantly out at the window, but he wheeled round to her as she made that joyful announcement.

'By Jove, Lizzie, if you could do that—if you *could* get me out of this scrape in any way, I would do anything for you.'

'Would you follow my advice in regard to the woman you ought to marry?'

That rather staggered him; for he had already made up his mind as to the woman he was to marry, and he felt certain that his sister would not suggest Miss Holt.

'No, I cannot promise that—but anything else you like.'

'Then, will you listen quietly to what I have to say?'

'Certainly—and with pleasure, if it is to give me a hint as to how I am to raise that thousand at once.'

He sat down again, and relit his pipe. She remained standing just behind his chair.

'Then, Tom,' (of late she had very seldom called him by his familiar name), 'I think if you were to consider our position—remember, there are four of us—you would sacrifice some of your own wishes for our sakes. Miss Holt is no doubt a very estimable young woman, and pretty, I admit; but she is now absolutely without fortune, and unless you mean to go in for hard work and—as she once suggested to me—become a pig-dealer, she would add to your difficulties, instead of reducing them.'

Walton smoked; he began, even under his present anxieties, to feel amazed. The Angel was very clever, and she was working up to some point where he would find that selfish considerations prompted her to this wise counsel.

'I don't see what you are driving at,' he said frankly.

'Then it is easy to let you see it—I want you to marry a lady whom we all love, and who would bring you eight hundred a year.'

'That's a temptation—but how do you know the lady would accept me?'

'From herself—she has not said anything definite, but from what she has said, I know that if you proposed she would say yes.'

'That's flattering, and I take it you are talking of Alice Harwood?'

'You are right.'

'Well, she is a nice girl, and— I'll think about it.'

'Marry her, and you will get a good wife who will be agreeable to us all, and who will relieve you from all difficulties,' she said urgently.

‘I’ll think about it,’ he repeated; ‘and in the mean while, give me your hint as to where I might get that thousand I want immediately.’

She looked at him as if doubting his sincerity—for they never could get over that established feeling of doubt of each other—and then, quietly:

‘I believe Sir Montague Lewis would give it to you. He has often said that he would help you out of any mess you got into.’

Walton jumped up, and his exclamation was like a shout of satisfaction.

‘By the Lord, you have hit it, Lizzie, and for once I am your debtor. You ought to be Chancellor of the Exchequer, for you have a way of finding out where to get money that amounts to genius. Now, do me another good turn—pack my bag at once, and let me be off. I can’t get the four o’clock train, but I have plenty of time for the late one. I would like to see Lewis before dinner, as he is sure to have some young fellows with him.’

‘When will you return?’

‘I cannot fix the time, but I believe that a week will serve my purpose.’

‘Then, shall I ask Alice to come and stay with us for a month?’

‘Oh, just as you like,’ he said evasively; ‘but I think you had better wait till I come back; at any rate, don’t tell her why you invite her, as the affair might not come off, you know.’

‘Then I shall say you are a great fool,’ said Miss Walton calmly.

‘Most men are in affairs of this sort,’ was the philosophical reply; ‘I am sorry to be one of them, but I can’t help it, Lizzie, and you must just put up with it.’

‘I shall not ask her unless you have some serious thought of what I propose, for it would cause her pain.’

‘Then, for heaven’s sake, don’t cause her pain; and don’t worry me any more—if you can help it,’ he exclaimed impatiently.

She knew that there was little hope of accomplishing her object, and her face darkened.

‘It is my last word, Tom, you will make a mistake if you take Mary Holt to be your wife—a mistake for which we shall have to suffer as well as you—and I think you owe some consideration to your mother and sisters.’

Walton looked at her with an expression in which indignation and amusement were mingled.

‘I don’t know exactly the rules of this sort of business,’ he said

with mock gravity, as he balanced his pipe on his finger; then he shook out the ashes and refilled it. 'I owe you consideration so far that I shall not allow you to go without lodging or food; but I claim for myself the liberty of marrying the woman who—to my thinking—will make me happy. You cannot have any objection to that?'

'But if she is to lead you into difficulties involving us all, when you have an easy way before you to make us comfortable?'

'Then, if she leads, we shall just follow her into the mess. Now, we needn't skin any more uncaught hares at present. I must be off at once, if I am to see Sir Montague before dinner.'

Nobody likes to see even minor plans upset; but this scheme of Miss Walton was in her eyes of the gravest importance. She wanted to rescue him from a woman she had come to hate, and to give him one who would be agreeable to the whole family, accompanied by the respectable income of eight hundred a year. And he refused! Words could not express her wrath and her sense of his insanity; so she left him without further speech, and packed his bag. She felt certain that he had only to ask and have, yet he persisted in his infatuation.

She had done her best to lead him into the ways which would be most satisfactory to the family, and she began to fear that she had failed. She had calculated upon Sarah's help, and Sarah did help by giving her a copy of her father's letter explaining Polly's position. It was given, however, under the conditions that Miss Walton should not allow it to pass out of her own hands, and that she would not say from whom she had received her information.

Then the sister thought that her triumph was assured. But she, like Sarah, had calculated too much on the mercenary spirit of his advances to Polly, and they were staggered to find that his infatuation was so great, that he was ready—ay, eager—to take the girl even when she had lost her fortune. Sarah had given in when she became aware of this; but Miss Walton, actuated by selfish motives, which she called common sense, would not yield. She, too, was obliged to own herself beaten after the foregoing conversation, and the bitterness of her disappointment was intensified when in a few days she received an invitation to Miss Harwood's wedding.

'What a fool he is!' she exclaimed fiercely; 'he will never have such a chance again, and it serves him right.'

Then she accepted the invitation, and proceeded to consider how she should dress for the occasion.

CHAPTER XLII.

GOUT AND PHILOSOPHY.

'You need not wait; I'll walk to the station,' said Walton, when the gig stopped at the gates of Elizabeth House, and the man he had brought with him to take the vehicle home inquired what he was to do.

He took his light overcoat over his left arm and his portmantau in his right hand, said good-bye to the man, and went up to the door. The servant knew him, and after depositing his incumbrances in the hall, he was at once shown into the library.

The Baronet was reclining in an easy-chair, and his left leg, propped up by cushions, rested on another. He had a copy of the 'Field' in his hand, and a profusion of sporting papers were scattered about the floor around him. The book-cases looked remarkably tidy, as if their contents had not been disturbed for a long time.

'I am glad to see you, Walton,' said Sir Montague; 'you are a blessing in disguise. All the fellows are off to Scotland and to Norway, and I have not had a soul with me for two days, and that confounded plague, the gout, has been working at my big toe with a vengeance all the time. I was just going to send over for you. Sit down, man, sit down.'

'I am sorry to learn that your old enemy has got hold of you again,' said Walton, taking a chair.

'He has got the hold, and I have no hope of ever being able to oust him. But what the deuce is the matter with you? You haven't gout.'

'I have something worse than that—an uneasy mind.'

'A woman or money?'

'Both.'

'It is always one or the other that makes a fellow look as you do just now; but when the two are combined, it's awkward. Come, out with it,—what's the bother? Have you ruined some wench, or has she ruined you?'

'I think I have done wrong to a woman, although I did not mean it; but people would not excuse me on that ground.'

'The world is very tolerant of our sins: it even endures our lives, and hears of our funeral with equanimity. It forgets and forgives with singular rapidity and beneficence. It is only our friends who keep the old scores marked up against us.'

The baronet folded his hands, looking very much satisfied

with himself for having settled in this easy fashion what the world thought.

‘What makes things worse is that I want to marry,’ said Walton awkwardly.

Sir Montague groaned, whether on account of Walton or of his big toe, it was impossible to say.

‘That’s worst of all. In my opinion, marriages ought to be confined to the place where they are supposed to be made.’

Walton laughed, and Lewis was gratified by the success of his satire; he became serious, however, when his friend delivered the next statement.

‘You have often said that when I was in a scrape you would help me out of it,’ continued Walton nervously. ‘Well, I am in a scrape now,—I want to marry, but before doing so I must pay a thousand pounds, and I want you to lend it to me.’

Sir Montague was certainly a little startled, but there was no unkindness in his question:

‘Who is it you want to marry?’

‘Miss Holt, your tenant at the Meadow.’

‘Has she consented?’

‘Not yet, but I feel sure she will as soon as I have accomplished the task she has set me of finding her cousin, who has run away—but that is in confidence, you understand.’

‘And who is this party to whom you must pay this thousand?’ As he put the question, a twinge of the gout shot through his limb, and he groaned again.

‘The cousin,’ answered Walton, and then hastily added, ‘There are the house and the home fields which you can have as security. I could raise the money upon them easily in a week, but I want the money at once. Will you help me?’

The enemy gave the baronet another twinge, and after he had got over the pang, he said quietly:

‘It’s a large sum, not to be found in every ditch you come to; but tell me how it is you require the money in such haste?’

Walton gave him a brief account of all the circumstances of the case, which seemed to afford his friend much entertainment. When he concluded, Sir Montague said:

‘All right, I’ll give you a cheque, and when you come back we can arrange about the security.’

So Walton started for the station with an easier mind than he had expected, for now when he found Sarah he would be able to clear off his debt.

(To be continued.)

BELGRAVIA.

OCTOBER 1879.

Queen of the Meadow.

BY CHARLES GIBBON.

(The right of translation is reserved.)

CHAPTER XLIII.

MR. PATCHETT EXPLAINS.

IT is a strange sensation that of feeling oneself quite alone: all the old friends who make up the joy and sorrow of our lives gone away, and nothing left but the memory—sad or glad, according to the key of our mood at the moment—of the days we have spent with them, and the thoughts we have interchanged.

Polly felt herself in that position just now. The whole world had changed from brightness to darkness, and chaos had come again so far as she was concerned. At first, the absurdity of Sarah's conduct had caused her to laugh even whilst she was most anxious to find her. But, when Walton had gone away, she began to realise the desolate position in which she was placed: Uncle Job dead, Sarah had deserted her, and Michael had almost renounced her. Walton appeared to be the only one who remained faithful to her; he had at once undertaken the service she had asked him to perform, and he had persisted in his assertion of love for her even when he understood that she was poor.

But what was all the fuss about? That was the question which disturbed her practical mind during the day and night after Sarah's disappearance. She was unconscious of having been unkind in any way, and she was decided that she would never marry Walton, although there was no likelihood now that she would ever marry Michael Hazell. Indeed, she would not, even if he were to ask her. Besides, it was cruel of him not to come near her when he must have known quite well that she was upset. She put on her hat and tied the ribbons with somewhat nervous but very determined fingers, and she drove to Mr. Patchett's office.

He received her with all the signs of sympathy which a good-natured man is capable of displaying. He tried to twist his fat face, which was all over dimples, into a solemn expression of condolence, and utterly failed; but she was too much put out to observe and respect his effort. She was certainly not in a very good condition to discuss business affairs. Mr. Patchett, in his friendly way, observed that she was not looking well, and suggested that, as there was no necessity to hurry matters, she might defer any arrangements she wished to make until she felt stronger.

'I am strong enough,' said Polly, with a forced smile; 'but I am bothered by the confusion in my affairs, and I want you to let me understand them. Mr. Hazell told me that you could do so, and I want to know why it is that on the one hand I am told that I have lost very little by the failure of the bank, and, on the other, that I have lost nigh everything?'

'Must I tell you?' said Mr. Patchett slowly, and with an evident desire that she would not insist.

'I wish you would. I have a right to know my exact position, and I desire to know it.'

'You are young, Miss Holt, and, you must pardon me for saying it, you are impulsive. Now, will you take my advice?'

'I cannot promise.'

'Of course it is the advice of a lawyer—as well as a friend—and that always takes more account of the interests of a client than of any nice conscientious scruples. I advise you to be generous to a man who has been a good friend to you, and not to inquire any further into this matter, as your fortune is quite safe.'

He spoke very seriously, and she became somewhat pale.

'What is it? Is there anything wrong?'

'On the contrary, there has been a great kindness done to you by a man who would prefer that you should know nothing about it.'

'You mean Michael—that is, Mr. Hazell?'

'Yes,' he answered, nodding, and apparently hoping that she would not now insist upon a full explanation.

She remained silent for a little while, and then, her face crimson and her lips quivering:

'I do insist upon knowing all about it. If he has done me a kindness such as I can accept, I desire to know it, that I may try to show him my gratitude.'

'Very well,' said Patchett reluctantly, 'Hazell told me that if you insisted I was to explain everything to you. I have given you my advice, and you refuse to take it. Then, the simplest way of showing how matters stand will be to let you read the draft of

the last will made by Job Hazell,—the will which he destroyed in your presence.'

She became still more pale, and her lips closed tightly as if she were afraid that she would tell him what Michael had said.

He went into Mr. Lee's room, and presently returned with the first copy of the will, which he opened and placed before her on his desk.

'You will read it more comfortably sitting here; and as I have some instructions to give to my clerks, I shall leave you alone whilst you do so. When you have done, just touch this bell,' (pointing to a hand-bell on the table), 'and I will come to you.'

'Thank you,' she said faintly, the blue foolscap pages in her hand shaking like the leaves of a tree when the wind blows.

She was very grateful for this consideration; for she felt a strange dread of these leaves of paper—a nervous superstition that they were to reveal something terrible: and it was a relief to be alone whilst she was reading them. The first few pages contained nothing that she did not already know; but when the clause came explaining the position of her fortune, and how it was saved only by Michael sacrificing his own, her expression was one of utter bewilderment.

Then she knitted her brows and said to herself—'I must be firm: I must go into this matter thoroughly.'

The practical spirit that was in her asserted itself. She took from her pocket the scrap of the burnt will which she had preserved, and was now able to read it complete. After explaining the position as Job had done to his son, the clause went on to say:

'Said Mary Holt would lose the whole of this sum unless she fulfilled the wishes of her father and married my son Michael, or some one else with my consent. The investment was made by the said Matthew Holt for the purpose before stated. I considered the investment a good one and quite safe. I believe there is no legal or moral obligation on my part to refund this money; but it is the wish of my son Michael that it should be done. I have consented to this because I believe that Mary Holt will marry him. If she does not, I desire that she should know these particulars of the investment, in order that she may be induced to act kindly towards my son Michael and do him justice as her conscience shall direct.'

She could not discover the meaning of this at once, and she read the passage many times. Then, gradually, she began to understand—to understand Michael's strange conduct on the last day she had seen Uncle Job alive—the trick by which he had got his

father to destroy the will with his own hand. He had given up his fortune to her! And yet he left her free to marry whoever pleased her most!

But Uncle Job from his grave called out to her to do him justice, and how was she to do it? Even by the fragment of the will she had been moved to ask that question again and again without being able to find the answer. Now there was something definite before her, and she would not shrink from doing justice to Michael so far as it was in her power, no matter what might be the cost to herself.

She touched the hand-bell.

Mr. Patchett appeared with such promptitude that he might have been listening for the summons instead of giving instructions to his clerks. She rose as he entered; she was very pale, but perfectly calm.

'I have read this, Mr. Patchett,' she said, handing the document to him, 'and I thank you for showing it to me. It has explained many things which puzzled me. But I do not yet quite realise the position. Does it mean that my father invested money in the County bank which has been all lost, and that Mr. Hazell, to save me, has given up his own fortune?'

'Exactly so. The arrangement was a peculiar one; Michael Hazell was only informed of it after the failure of the bank, and then he insisted that you should not be a loser by a mistake made by his father and yours. I tried to dissuade him, but without any effect. He is an obstinate fellow in regard to you, and will not act like a reasonable being when your affairs are in question.'

'I shall not accept this gift,' she said; her face, which had been so pale, now flushed with something of vexation and chagrin. 'What am I to do?'

Mr. Patchett smiled, and, patting her on the shoulder, as if with the idea that he might in that manner soothe her, he answered:

'If you were my daughter, I would tell you there is a very simple way of settling the whole matter; and the simplest way is always the most just—consent to be his wife.'

'He refuses to take me,' said Polly, bitterness in the tone, and a flash of indignation in the eyes.

Mr. Patchett was as much surprised at the information as Walton had been—more so, as he knew what Michael had sacrificed for her sake. But he took a view of the position very different from Walton's, for he fancied that he saw how all difficulties might be overcome by a little explanation on his part.

'Will you give me your confidence, Miss Holt?' he said, with
 one of his

‘If I can—yes.’

‘Then, would you—pray excuse my boldness, but I am your friend—would you marry Hazell if he asked you?’

The question was certainly a bold one, and it staggered her for a moment, but, drawing a long breath :

‘I would, provided that I felt sure it would make him happy.’

‘Then everything can be settled comfortably if you will allow me to tell him that.’

‘But you must not,’ she said decisively. ‘You asked me in confidence, and I answered you. I desire you to be silent about what I have said.’

‘As you please ; but I think you are not acting very wisely. I shall of course say nothing about what you have told me until you give me leave.’

‘Thanks. And now I want you to tell me how I can return this money. As my father made the investment under the conditions stated by Uncle Job, it does not belong to me, and in any case the loss should not fall upon Michael Hazell. Can you arrange this for me at once?’

‘Easily ; there is nothing so easy as getting rid of money. But I wish you would think over it. Come to me a month, or even a fortnight, hence, and then tell me that you are still of the same mind, and I shall do as you desire.’

‘There is no necessity for delay. I shall not alter my mind. Please arrange the matter as quickly as you can, for I shall have no rest until the money is returned.’

‘Very well,’ said Mr. Patchett, making a note of her command, and marvelling at the curious ways in which generosity and antagonism could be displayed.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE ROSEBUD.

THERE was a feeling of anger rather than of gratitude in Polly’s breast when she left the lawyer’s office. The explanation of the riddle had not pleased her, for it showed that Walton had been truthful, and Michael—well, if he had not exactly told a lie, he had concealed very important facts from her, and in her eyes that was very much the same thing. And then—the idea that she could accept money from the man who had refused to marry her!

The cheeks burned and the eyes sparkled with irritation. He would have *made her* a dependent on his generosity whilst he

offered her the greatest insult that any woman could receive! That was too much for her to endure; and if the returning of this money were to make her a pauper to-morrow, she would persist in having the instructions she had given to Patchett carried out to the letter, and immediately. She now knew what Uncle Job meant by asking her to do justice to his son, and she would do it. She now comprehended all Michael's self-reproaches. His conduct had been cruel, if not dishonourable; he had treated her as if she were a silly child who could not bear misfortune; he was to play the secret benefactor, and she was to be denied the privilege of knowing that she owed him gratitude.

She had business to transact in the village, but she gave it up for the day and drove away at once, her first thought being to go straight to Marshstead and tell Michael that she had heard all, and how she had determined to act. But as she drove along the green lanes her temper calmed, and gradually she began to see the matter in its true light. She began to realise the great love which this man must have for her when he had been ready to give up his fortune to her without one word or sign, and without making the slightest claim upon her regard in consequence.

She went into the parlour and took from the desk that rosebud Michael had plucked. Then sitting down, the slanting shadows of the twilight falling upon her, the light wind causing the branches of the rose-tree to flutter gently on the window-panes, she kissed the rose, and crossing her arms on the table, rested her head upon them and sobbed bitterly. This was the man who loved her so, and she had lost him!

Mr. Patchett was a commonplace man, but he had a great deal of common sense, as well as good-humour and kindness. So when Polly left him, he grinned and said to himself:

'This is only a lovers' squabble. I can't tell him what she has said, as I have promised not to do so. But I might give him a hint, and that hint might set matters right. I'll try it.'

Thereupon he drove to Marshstead almost immediately after Polly had left the office.

He found Michael just returned from the labour of the fields—a man low in spirit, and looking as if he had committed a crime.

'It's you, Mr. Patchett,' he said with a weary look in which there was neither surprise nor pleasure.

The wan face, the dragging step, and the weak listless way in which he spoke showed that all the world had become indifferent to him. The one cry that was in his heart was 'Work, work, work!' That he believed to be the panacea for all ills,—and it

did help him to forget the sin against his father, and the loss of the woman for whose sake he had done the wrong.

'You are getting on with your harvest, I see,' said Patchett, in his pleasantest manner; 'and a good one I suppose it is to be.'

'Yes, it is good.'

He spoke in such a tired way that Patchett felt inclined to advise him to go to bed, and to be off himself at once. He did better: he put his big fat hand on Michael's shoulder, and looking at him with a kindly twinkle in his eyes, he said:

'I think I know what you are worrying about. Miss Holt has been with me, and, as you directed, I explained everything to her about the money.'

'Then she knows all,' exclaimed Michael, with a slight start; and a return of interest in life was indicated by the flush on his cheeks.

'Everything; and she has instructed me to transfer the whole of the money to you at once.'

'You must not do that.'

'I must obey the wishes of my clients when they won't take my advice. But I thought I would come and tell you, and suggest that you should see her. Very likely you might be able to persuade her that she was making a mistake. She might, if only for your sake, consent to let matters stand as you have arranged them.'

If there had been an earthquake at that moment Michael would have stood calmly by and watched houses and stock tumble about him without any sign of surprise. He seemed to have lost the sense of pain, and Mr. Patchett was greatly puzzled by the absent manner in which he answered:

'Miss Holt is very determined once she has made up her mind to anything, and I believe my going to her would be of no use.'

As he spoke, there was a vacant expression in his eyes—he was looking inward to the memory of the Polly Holt whom he loved. Somehow, the Polly of the present and the Polly of the past had become two individualities: the first a friend to whom he was ready to render any service; the other, his love, whose spirit was his constant companion. He could conjure up the dear face at any moment, look into the clear, expressive eyes, and find comfort in imaginary conversations with her. He was no believer in what is called 'Spiritualism,' but he understood the spiritualistic powers of memory. He could feel the touch of her hand—a hand that knew what work was, and yet was as shapely as that of the most daintily nurtured damsel. Once—long ago—she had put her arm round his

neck, calling him brother, and he had impulsively kissed her. She had chided him for that, but very gently, and he cherished the memory of the thrill of 'fearful joy' which he experienced in that happy moment. He was recalling all this now whilst he was speaking of 'Miss Holt.'

Patchett could not understand him, and was inclined to give up all attempt to do so. He made out this much—however, that there was a more serious breach between the lovers than he had imagined. He was sorely tempted to betray the confidence of his client, and to tell Michael that happiness was within his reach. But Patchett was an old-fashioned lawyer, and respected the confidence of a client, although he would act upon the knowledge it afforded him to benefit those whose business he had to conduct. He took a cunning way of gaining his point in this case.

'Miss Holt is no doubt a very resolute young lady, and, I think, too impetuous; but at present she is in much distress over this affair, and you ought to see her.'

He had no need to say any more. Polly in distress! Michael was roused at once. Of what blunders he had been guilty!

'I shall go instantly.'

'My gig is outside; I'll drive you over.'

He opened the door quietly and crossed the threshold, but halted, dismayed and astounded, when he saw Polly with head bowed on her arms and a faded rosebud in one hand. She had not observed his entrance, and he, passing quickly to her side, touched her shoulder with the tenderness of a father, and the sympathy of a lover.

'Polly, what is it?'

She sprang to her feet and stared at him. He saw that her eyes were red and swollen, indicating that she had been crying a great deal; and as crying was one of the feminine weaknesses which he knew she despised, he was more astounded than before. There was a gleam of passion in her eyes; she dropped the rosebud on the floor and trampled upon it. Then it seemed as if she felt that she was crushing the life out of something that was very dear to her, and the tears startled in her eyes again. She became calm by a strong effort of will, and replied to his question—but with no affectation of indifference and no attempt to conceal her discomposure.

'I have been put out by several circumstances, and chiefly by the discovery of what you have done. You have deceived me as you——'

She was going to say, 'as you deceived Uncle Job; ' but there



"She sobbed bitterly."

she stopped, for the remembrance of the generous motive of the man checked the harsh words she had been about to utter. He understood, however, and bowed his head.

'I have no excuse to offer,' he said softly; 'the only one which might have influenced you cannot be offered now. I have no more to say than this—I tried to do what seemed to me right. I believe that if my father had lived he would have owned that I was right in trying to save you from the loss of the fortune that had been placed in his care.'

'Was there no other motive?' she asked bitterly.

'What other motive could there have been?' he said in a tone of such surprise as an innocent man uses when he is accused of murder.

'To place me under such an obligation as you fancied would compel me to marry you!' (Her foot was still upon the rosebud; her voice was almost harsh, and her expression was one of mingled pain and fierceness.)

'Oh, Polly!' was all he could say as he stepped back, his heart wrung with shame at the idea that she could be capable of attributing such a mean motive to him.

'Perhaps I am wrong,' she exclaimed hurriedly, and in much excitement. 'I must be wrong, since you tried to hide the transaction from me; but if you had respected me as you wished me to believe you did, you would have told me all and left me free to choose whether or not I would accept the money which your father says he was bound by neither law nor morals to restore to me—you would have left me to judge whether or not I could accept it and—you.'

Again he bowed his head.

'I was wrong. I know it—try to forgive me; I cannot forgive myself. I meant to do you a service, and instead of that I have caused you pain. But I knew that you were separated from me; I wished to secure your comfort, and I believe that the man you are about to marry would turn from you if he knew that your fortune was lost.'

'You mean Walton,' she said, still fiercely and bitterly, 'and you are doing another wrong in slandering an honest gentleman. He is ready to marry me even if I had not a penny.'

'I respect him for that more than I have ever been able to do until now. But I have suffered too, and—do you think you are quite fair to me?'

'Quite fair,' she went on impetuously, and yet that rosebud under her foot seemed to send a thrill of memories through her mind in which Michael was the central figure. 'I have told

Patchett to return the money to you; and after this we must not meet until I am able to see you without being vexed as I am now.'

The sense of humiliation in having done wrong—although done in all kindness of heart—was strong upon him, because the results had proved so unhappy; and so he said sadly:

'Very well, Polly, I shall do as you wish.'

His absolute submission was more irritating than the most passionate reproaches could have been. One can answer angry words; but there is no answer to the slave who bares his back meekly and says, in effect, 'So be it, master, use the lash at your will.' This was the position he had taken up. She was conscious all the time that he had made a great sacrifice for love of her, and now she was scolding him and he would not retort. Her vexation was with herself as much as with him. If he would only say something disagreeable—if he would only tell her that she was a fool and cruel, she could have found some excuse for herself. But there he was with that sad face—so different from what it used to be—and those sad eyes gazing tenderly but hopelessly upon her, and the pain which she felt on his account made her the more angry with him.

She had a faint consciousness that there had been some—nay, a good deal of—perversity on her part, and that annoyed her the more; for one is never so much put out as when sensible of being in the wrong, without having the courage to own it. And still there was that rosebud under her foot, and every pressure upon it sent electric shocks of memories through her heart.

'I am glad to see that you can take things so coolly,' she went on: 'it shows how little regard you have for the position in which you have placed me—it shows how little feeling you have for me.'

At that he drew himself up: he could bear her reproaches on account of the wrong he had done in disobeying his father's wishes and for the guilt of having deceived him; but it was impossible to bear the taunt that he had no feeling for her, when all had been done for her. Still, whilst he spoke firmly, there was tenderness in the tone.

'You are angry, Polly,' he said quietly, (and it was a stupid thing to say, for nobody likes to be told that he or she is pitied for being angry, especially when they happen to be in that condition,) 'and you will be sorry, by-and-by, for misjudging me as you are doing now—and I believe that you are saying in passion what you know is not and could not be true. I wish we had not fallen into this unpleasant discussion. I came to you because I

understood you were in distress. Whatever the distress may be, I am afraid I have made it greater instead of relieving you, as I wished to do. I see that I can be of no use to you, and so, good-bye.'

He held out his hand, but she clasped both hands behind her back, and, her eyes still red with crying, she looked at him with an expression which was intended to show that their friendship was at an end.

'So be it,' he said, again submissively, and turned to go away.

But as he moved towards the door a vision of the Polly he loved flashed upon him, and he wheeled round. There was passionate yearning in his expression, there was passionate love in his voice.

'Polly, this is like a final parting—let me kiss you.'

She drew back with a white, scared face: the expression repelled him, and yet it seemed to give consent to his wish. When she moved, he saw the rosebud on which she had trampled. He picked it up, and, as he did so, the withered leaves fluttered about the floor.

'I thought this might be something you had dropped,' he said, as he threw the leafless stem on the table. Then he took her two hands in his. 'Polly, don't let us quarrel. We can be friends even when you are—married. Let me say my last word to you on this subject—whatever you may do, I shall always be your true servant. When you have need of service, call me. You cannot give me the place of a husband, but you can give me the place of a brother. That place I shall always take. I have done what I believed to be right, and in doing it you have been always in my mind.'

She felt the truth and love that were in his words, and her head was bent a little forward, and he kissed her. She did not resent this liberty, but, quietly drawing away from him, she said:

'I am grateful to you, Michael, for all that you have done. You have acted as you thought best, and you have acted with the kindest motives. But you have done it in the wrong way; and so, good-bye.'

He made no further attempt either to explain or conciliate; the matter was settled, and they had parted. But when he had gone away, Polly gathered up the leaves of the rosebud and placed them with the stem in her desk.

CHAPTER XLV.

HIDE AND SEEK.

It was done, then ; and those withered leaves of the rosebud that she had picked up from the floor were the tokens of a broken friendship—perhaps of a dream of love in which she ‘ beheld what never was to be.’ And yet, could she not speak ? could she not tell him how she admired his self-sacrifice although she had felt angry with his distrust of her ? Could she not tell him that she was sorry for having, in the heat of passion, attributed to him motives that could never have actuated him ? But no, she could not do that, for she had offered herself to him and he had turned her away.

Besides, was she sure of herself ? Were not her doubt of him, and her indignation with him, proof that she did not love him as she ought to love the man whom she desired to marry ? She could not answer that ; but she felt keenly that the sudden snapping and breaking of the bonds of a friendship which had endured for years, and with which memory found many happy associations, would make life very different to her. Sarah, too, was gone, and Polly thought of her disappearance much more seriously than she had done until now when she had parted with Michael. She felt quite certain that the parting was a final one. She had not done anything to deserve such worry as all this involved.

She went to her bed that night very wearied ; but there was no sobbing now and her eyes were dry.

The soft sunlight of the early autumn morning gleamed whitely on the green leaves of trees and hedgerows, and on the white gable of the Meadow homestead ; it glistened on the yellow ricks and on the sheaves of grain piled in the fields, making them shine like gold. But there was no sunshine on Polly’s face when she went out that morning to attend to the ordinary duties of the day.

The harvest work was fast drawing to a close, for the weather had been exceptionally favourable, and until to-day Polly had been proud of her crops. To-day she was indifferent to everything : the whole world seemed to have deserted her ; and then she stood up in cold firmness, saying to herself, ‘ I can do without the world.’

But the strange look upon her face, the white cheeks usually so healthfully coloured, and the dull eyes which had been hitherto so bright with the mere enjoyment of life when she came forth of

attracted the attention of all her people.

as is taking the death of the old man to heart

more'n she ought to,' said Mrs. Carter to her neighbour, a sturdy old Irishwoman with a blue kerchief over her head and fastened under the chin, in place of the ordinary sun-bonnet worn by the other women.

'Poor soul! sure, my heart's aching for her this minute. I never saw a crature change like that before. An' she has the kind heart in her too, God bless her.'

'That's true, Bridget,' Mrs. Carter continued, as she fastened the band of a sheaf with extra energy. 'Kind and openhanded she has always been, and everyone about the place would be sorry if any trouble should come to her.'

'Thin, ye may be sorry now, for there's trouble in every look she gives; an' it's more than the old man's death that's in it, I'll go bail.'

'Maybe, maybe,' said Mrs. Carter, continuing her work, and wisely keeping her own counsel about what she knew of Michael Hazell's wooing and how Walton had crossed it.

'They say there's a woman in all the mischief the devil makes,' Bridget went on; 'but I'm thinking there's always a boy in it too, and there's a boy in this one.'

Even old Carter, who was as a rule obtuse in regard to the expression of faces, and went about his own business in a stolid way, never thinking of how people looked or spoke—even he noticed the change in his mistress, and instead of the ordinary 'good morning,' he exclaimed:

'Eh, missus, you ain't like yourself this morning!'

'Then, who am I like, Carter?' she said with a forced smile.

'Like somebody that wants the doctor,' was the prompt reply.

'Nonsense, man, I am as well as ever I was in my life—only I did not sleep well last night. The doctor could do nothing for me.'

'I believe that,' said Carter, wagging his grey head sagaciously.

She was sensible of the sympathy of her people, but she was vexed with herself that she should have permitted the signs of her sorrow to become so palpable to them. She would have been still more vexed if she had known the other half of Carter's remark: he thought, but out of respect for her did not say—'Master Walton is the doctor *you* want.' For it had become an accepted theory amongst the old servants who watched her affectionately, and even amongst the extra hands employed for the harvest, that Walton was the man she favoured.

Having given her directions for the work of the day, she returned to the house and waited anxiously for the post, hoping that there would be a letter from Sarah. But it was still early.

could not rest in the house ; so she walked across the meadow towards a point of the road where she was sure to intercept Zachy on his round.

The old postman came along with his usual shuffling trot, and the moment he saw her, pulled up and gave her 'good morning,' whilst he examined his packet of letters.

'Here's only one, Miss, and it's from London. Queer, ain't it, you get a letter from London sooner than from anywhere else? It ain't fair that there should be such partiality shown. Our town pays taxes and rates as well as London, and why shouldn't we have the same attention paid to us? Though I is a government officer, I speak my mind.'

'Quite right, Zachy ; speak your mind, and then nobody can have a chance of saying that you were misunderstood.'

She was moving away, but the old postman lingered, shifting his bundle of letters and his staff from one hand to the other, and looking as if he had something to say.

'Begging pardon, Miss, but I ought to tell you that they do say in the town that your cousin and Master Walton have run away.'

She turned quickly.

'Who said that?'

'Everybody says it,' answered Zachy, who did not feel quite comfortable under the steady stare of Polly's eyes. 'You see Master Walton went to the station last night and asked the clerk if he had seen Miss Hodsoll in the morning, and where she had taken a ticket for. "It was London, sir," says the clerk, and Master Walton took a ticket for London too, and went after her. I thought I ought to tell you, as maybe you mightn't know. Hope there's no offence, Miss.'

Polly was chagrined to find that the fact of Sarah's elopement had already become known ; but she answered quietly :

'Miss Hodsoll has gone to London on business, and you can tell anyone who inquires about her that Mr. Walton has been good enough to follow in the hope of being able to assist her.'

'Very well, Miss, I'll say that. You won't mind me mentioning it. I thought it was right to tell you, as maybe you might be anxious. Morning, Miss ;' and he trotted away with the conviction that the affair was one which would afford gossip for a month at least.

The story was very soon all over the county, and it assumed many forms. To Sir Montague Lewis, still groaning with the gout and lamenting his solitary position, all his young companions being away, the story suggested that Walton had played him a

shabby trick and had got money from him under false pretences ; for, no doubt, Walton had used the money to pay the expenses of the elopement. But there was no vindictiveness in the baronet's mind towards his young friend. When the pangs of gout would allow him, he only laughed at the incident and himself.

'Sly dog !' he muttered in the intervals of the pangs ; 'but he might as well have told me the truth. He would have got what he wanted all the same, and he ought to have been able to trust me in such a case.'

Then he chuckled over the event, and nursed the afflicted limb.

The letter which Polly had received was from Walton. It had been written the previous night, immediately after his arrival in London. He had been puzzled for a few minutes as to how he should address her ; with his feelings regarding her, the ordinary form, 'My dear Miss Holt,' was absurdly cold ; and he dared not yet say, as he longed to say, 'My own darling Polly.' So he began without any of the usual formulæ, leaving Polly to fill in whatever she pleased. He wrote little and to the purpose.

'Sarah did take a ticket for London ; the booking-clerk at the station knew her quite well, and was able to give me the information at once. In my conversation with you I forgot to ask an important question. Has she any friends or acquaintances here to whom she would be likely to go ? Please answer by return of post. Yours ever, T. W.'

She sent the reply by telegraph : by that means she gave him the required information at once, and she escaped the necessity of writing a letter to him. The telegram informed him that his own solicitor, Mr. Smith, had been a friend of Sarah's father, who had entrusted to him the care of his daughter's affairs.

Having despatched the message, she proceeded to make arrangements which would enable her to leave home for a week. She gave her instructions so quietly to Carter that he thought she was simply going for a holiday, and he was sure it would do her good ; but it was queer that she should go away before the end of harvest. His wife was to take charge of the house during the absence of the mistress, and he was to attend to the routine of work out-of-doors.

During the day she many times wished that Michael had been there to help her, but she was quite determined this time to prove to herself that she could do without him. He, however, had heard the report of the supposed elopement, and whilst he was astounded he presently saw reason to rejoice. Polly was still free, and notwithstanding what had passed between them, he might look to a distant future in which it was possible that they should be together.

That pleasant dream was immediately dispelled by the thought of what she must be suffering now. That she had a sincere affection for Sarah he knew; that she had been fond of Walton he believed; and now—as the rumour ran—both had deceived her. His heart ached for her, and he would have run to the Meadow at once but for the doubt as to whether his sympathy would give relief or cause additional pain. So he checked himself, and sent a note simply asking, ‘Can I be of any use to you? If so, please give me the happiness of knowing that I am able to do something to help you.’

The message was very simple, and yet she found it difficult to give the right sort of answer. She wanted him to understand that she would never again ask his service in anything; but she could not bring herself to say that in plain words now that her passion was gone and she was full of sorrow. Of course she had quite made up her mind that she could have nothing more to do with Michael, and she assured herself again and again that she could hold stubbornly to her resolution.

In the end she sent a reply as simple as the message: ‘Thank you. There is nothing you can do for me at present.’

She inserted the ‘at present’ after much hesitation, because it implied that she might accept his assistance at some future time, and he might take advantage of it, or rather it might raise a hope which could never be realised. However, it was kinder than a plain ‘No,’ and she wished to be kindly to him for the sake of old times.

Then she went on with her preparations for her journey in pursuit of Sarah, but she was interrupted in these by a telegram from Walton:

‘Smith has given me her address, and I shall bring her home to-morrow.’

Polly had not much confidence in the success of her agent, but she decided to wait until the next day.

CHAPTER XLVI.

WALTON'S PENANCE.

THE man was in earnest, and he had set about the task appointed to him with a degree of energy which he had rarely displayed before, except when the Derby or some other important race was the object of his interest. At present Walton felt as if he himself were running a race against Hazell, and Polly was the prize to be won. But there were nobler motives at work within him. No man can learn from a woman that she loves him without giving

her some love in return. Sarah had proved how much she was ready to sacrifice for him—a large part of her means, and her home. He was more keenly touched by the opening of the packet she had given him than any of the companions who knew him only as a reckless young dog, and a jolly young fellow who was going to the dogs, could have imagined. He was determined to repay the money, and to bring her back to the Meadow in spite of herself.

He had always an uncomfortable feeling when he had to visit Mr. Smith, because they always had such unpleasant matters to discuss. But as soon as he received Polly's telegram he went straight to the lawyer's office and there obtained Sarah's address.

She had gone to an old-fashioned hotel or boarding-house in one of the side streets off the Strand, where her father had been in the custom of lodging whenever he visited London. Miss Hodsoll was not in the house when he called, but the porter said he would inform her that he had called as soon as she returned, if the gentleman would leave his card.

'I shall call again in an hour,' said Walton; 'you need not say that anybody asked for her.'

He passed something into the man's hand as he spoke, and the man bowed. There was no doubt of his fidelity after that.

Walton paced the Strand anxiously, keeping always near the top of the street in which Sarah's hotel was situated, in the hope that he might intercept her as she returned. He tried to amuse himself by examining the photographs of pretty actresses hung in the doorways of the theatres, and of fashionable beauties placed with equal ostentation in the shop windows. He did not see Sarah, and the hour expired; he returned to the hotel.

Fortunately the same porter was in the hall, and when the question was put he answered:

'No, sir, she is not in, but her number is seventeen on the first floor.'

Walton understood.

'All right,' he said, and proceeded up the stairs.

He had no difficulty in finding No. 17. He knocked, and receiving the answer 'Come in,' entered.

Sarah was seated at the table writing. She sprang to her feet the moment she saw him; the pen dropped from her hand and her face became white.

'Now, you are not to disturb yourself,' he said quietly as he closed the door behind him. 'I come as your friend, and with no desire to bother you. I know, of course, that friends are generally more troublesome than they ought to be, but I am not going to

offer you any "good advice." I know what that is, for I have had a lot of it from our Angel. It means a lot of egotistical twaddle in which the adviser exalts himself to the throne of grace whilst he looks upon his victim as down in the pit, and, pretending to try and fish him up, only scores his back with the point of the hook. I am not going to do that.'

He had purposely made his introduction as long as possible in order to give her time to recover from the surprise which his appearance naturally created; and he succeeded, for she answered him very calmly. There was none of Polly's passionate nature in her: there was intense feeling, but there was also an intense power of self-control.

'I am sorry that I cannot say I am glad to see you, Mr. Walton. Indeed, I regard your visit as an intrusion, for I asked my cousin not to follow me, and of course it is she who has sent you.'

'Well, yes; that is to say, it was she who told me of your going away.'

He spoke awkwardly, for he was thinking of her letter, and wondering if she guessed that he had seen it.

She remained standing, and did not ask him to be seated. There was a sneer on her lips, but her eyelids drooped as if they might rise in gladness when she asked:

'What is it you want with me?'

In spite of the sneer, there was something in the drooping eyelids which indicated to him the answer that would have given her happiness, and for an instant the answer was on his lips. He was not a strong man, and would have been glad to have given pleasure rather than pain to anyone, but to her before all others, feeling as he did now that he had done her a great wrong. But he gave himself a moral shake; he advanced to her bravely; as she drew back, he halted and placed on the table the notes he had obtained for the cheque of Sir Montague Lewis.

'I see that you are angry with me, and I said that I did not want to bother you; but I wish you would give me your hand.'

She hesitated: then stepping forward she took his hand, but there were sobs in her throat, and she could not speak. He went on:

'The first thing I want is to give you this money. Your generosity has given me more pain than your greatest anger could have done. At your anger I could have laughed, but this——'

He paused as if he were afraid of making a fool of himself. She remained in the same position, stolidly gazing at him, without any expression of pity, love, or hate.

'Well,' he continued, giving himself another shake, 'I own

that I have acted badly, but I did not know that I had acted so badly as your letter to your cousin seems to hint.'

'Sir,' she interrupted harshly, 'I hinted at nothing.'

'Then, perhaps I ought to say that my guilty conscience misinterpreted your words and action; but you know as well as I do that if a man were compelled to take every girl to whom he speaks an affectionate word, we would all have to emigrate to the Salt Lake country immediately.'

He was trying to make a joke of the position, but she stood so still, grim, and speechless, that his awkwardness increased with every word he uttered. But her silence began to irritate him.

'Come, come, Sarah, I am not a boy, and you are not a girl—excuse me for saying so—and as we are old friends, we are not to quarrel about trifles. We must continue to be friends throughout our lives, if it were for no other reason than that your father and I were friends.'

She still stood looking him straight in the face, and would not speak. He fairly lost his temper.

'Confound it! why are you so cold? Why will you not speak? If I have done anything unpardonable, at least you might tell me what the—what the thing is.'

She placed a chair for him; but she did it with that air of satirical politeness which makes even the calmest nature start back and resent the movement of assumed courtesy as an insult. At any rate, that was how Walton took it. But he had lost his temper, and she only made him the more irritable by the cool way in which she said:

'Will you be seated, Mr. Walton.'

He drew back as if he were about to wheel round and leave the room. That, indeed, was his impulse; but he checked it, for he was determined this time to have it out with her. He had begun to think that she was not using him well, and that even if he had tried to say pretty things to her when he called of an afternoon or remained to supper, she was making a great deal too much of it. Any fellow would have done the same to a handsome woman with whom he was constantly brought into contact, and would have had no idea that he was thereby laying himself open to an action for breach of promise. He began to think himself very much ill-used.

'No, thank you, I can stand,' he replied, with a slight bend of the head. 'I have brought you this' (pointing to the notes), 'and I cannot tell you how sorry I am that the payment has been delayed so long. I also bring a message from your cousin. She wishes you to return home at once in order to avoid scandal, and,

if I might dare to offer advice, I would say that you ought to obey her.'

She did not even look at the pile of notes he had laid on the table. She had gone to the window, and was gazing out upon the dull gray street. There was no thoroughfare, and only an occasional cab or a tradesman's cart disturbed the residents.

When she turned to him again, the cold stolid look had gone from her face, and the expression was one of such absolute anguish that Walton felt his heart sink. He would have been glad at that moment if she had been his sister Carry, so that he could have taken her in his arms and tried to comfort her. But she spoke steadily and calmly.

'You are very kind, Mr. Walton; forgive me for any unkindness I have shown to you. You took me by surprise, and—and I have not been very strong lately.'

He revived instantly, and interrupted her with something of his customary cheeriness.

'There is a train starts for Dunthorpe in an hour,' he said, looking at his watch; 'that gives us plenty of time. So, get ready and come along; it will make Polly happy and me too.'

'No,' she answered quietly. 'I shall not return to the Meadow.'

'Now, don't talk nonsense; you must get home.'

'I have no home, and I have told you that I cannot go back to Polly.'

He was perplexed, and then a bright idea occurred to him.

'Will you think over it until this time to-morrow, and then I will take your answer?'

'Very well; you can call to-morrow.'

'All right.'

And they parted with every appearance of being good friends again.

(To be continued.)

Threads and Thrums in Lower Life.

BY DR. ANDREW WILSON.

DESPITE the polite attentions of the housemaid's broom and the avenging duster wielded by that enemy to dust and cobwebs, an indefatigable member of the spider-fraternity has been busily engaged in a snug corner of my room for some days past. Day by day some new phase or feature has been apparent in the work whereon Madame Arachne has been employing her energies and time. The ruthless duster has more than once despoiled the fabric which took two days' hard labour to rear; and to my certain knowledge the broom on one occasion has annihilated a structure the manufacture of which cost probably as much labour and ingenuity to devise, as did the production of that æsthetic coloured print in which the goddess of the duster is arrayed. But the household deities possess their own peculiar views concerning the selection of a legitimate site for a spider's dwelling-place. It is, in truth, questionable whether Arachne and her web would be accorded any place whatever on the face of the earth, were the notions and proclivities of our practical Lares and Penates consulted in the matter. Purpose, design, and use are paramount ideas in the mind accustomed to 'set things straight' in our homes and by our hearths; and flies in the matter of provisions and edibles, or spiders in the matter of cobwebs, naturally meet with scant ceremony from practical hands and hearts of non-zoological type. Even admitting that purposive design and a plain use of the Arachne-family, as well as a moral for the infant mind, are embodied in the well-known nursery rhyme detailing the results of a spider's invitation to a frivolous and unsuspecting fly, the web-makers are not regarded as well-favoured creatures on account of their rapacious propensities, and enmity to the buzzing nuisance of the household. Both insect and Arachnid are assailed and assaulted by aid of the lethal broom and duster and by the seductive *papier-mouche*; and captor and captured thus meet with the stern and uncompromising fate which oftentimes environs the footsteps of lower as well as of higher existence.

Gazing at Madame Arachne's handiwork in the corner of the room, one's thoughts run off, if not exactly at a tangent, at least into byeways which lead to the shallows of philosophy, and occasionally into the depths of profound reflection likewise. Speculation becomes rife regarding the source, origin, and growth of the construc-

tive powers and the trained faculties which decide the site and build the house of Arachne and Co., spinners and fabricators, of Britain and the South, East, and West generally—although, be it remarked, the branches of the firm which flourish in the South are more notable even than the representatives which carry on the business within the limits of ‘the adjacent islands of Great Britain and Ireland,’ as the Free Kirk minister in the Hebrides denominated these realms. Then to such sage reflections succeed others not less profound perhaps, regarding the spiders’ place in nature, and the nearest relatives of such ‘mechanical persons,’ as Rob Roy, to Bailie Nicol Jarvie’s extreme disgust, termed the spinners and weavers of his day. And again one’s thoughts speed sidewise to consider other makers and firms of threads and fabrics, dwelling some by land and some by sea. Finally comes the determination to afford some light, if not sweetness, in the matter of the spinners of lower life. And so, here ends this rambling introduction to a brief chronicle of spiders and spinners, of cobwebs and silken fabrics, and other materials, known as a rule only to the cunning and industrious few.

Once upon a time a Lydian purple-dyer had a beauteous daughter, Arachne by name, and she, so runs the legend, was a spinner of no mean powers. But vanity of her deft art was the fair Arachne’s weakness, and she was led to challenge Minerva to a trial of skill in spinning. Such a challenge, coming even from a demigoddess, not to speak of a humble mortal, would have been rudeness enough; and resenting the liberty, Minerva is said to have changed the purple-dyer’s daughter into a spider, in which guise, it is to be presumed, she would have scope and use for her weaving powers. Thus much for mythology, and by way of accounting for the zoologist’s reasons for including the spider tribes and their near relatives the mites and scorpions under the common term *Arachnida*. In the popular zoology which grows with us from our earliest days a spider is, of course, an ‘insect.’ Zoologically, Arachne and her neighbours claim a rank of higher nature than that assigned to the bulk of the insect class; and it may be well, as facilitating our recognition of the personal history of the spinners in question, to glance at the head-marks of their race. A spider’s head, to begin with an important region of its body, does not exist as a separate and distinct portion of its body, as in an insect, but is amalgamated with its chest. Like the insects, the spider and her neighbours possess legs, which are attached to the chest region alone, and which do not belong to the tail as in the nearly related lobsters and their relations. The tail or ‘abdomen’ of the spider is moreover unjointed, and in this latter respect differs from the

tails of the insect tribe; and whilst the latter possesses a pair of 'feelers'—technically termed 'antennæ'—springing from the head, the spider exhibits a total want of such appendages, although persons skilled in the science of comparisons (which the learned name 'homology') are prone to consider that the big jaws of a spider, carrying the poison-fangs, are in reality the altered feelers of the Arachnidan fraternity. Be this as it may, feelers are plainly wanting in the spinners and weavers; and another point of difference between the insects and the latter is found in the total absence of wings; although it is noteworthy that certain insects, by no means of lowly grade, in addition to others of plebeian and parasitic habits, want wings entirely. Nor must we neglect to note that the Arachnidans are the gainers in respect of legs, which invariably number eight. The veriest aristocrat of an insect never possesses more than six legs, at least when fully grown; for it is permissible neither from an æsthetic nor from a scientific point of view to take into account the fleshy stumps with which some insects, in the days of their infancy, and when appearing as the Epicurean caterpillars, are provided. In the matter of breathing as well, the Arachnidans bear off the palm in respect of their possessing certain peculiar bags placed in the sides of their bodies, filled with delicate folds or leaves, and named pulmonary or lung sacs. The insect breathes by a curious arrangement of air-tubes, branching everywhere throughout its body; so that the spider possesses a more localised and a better-defined breathing apparatus, although a close likeness to the features of the insect in this latter respect, that of breathing, may exist amongst Arachnidans themselves. Last of all, amongst characters in insects which spiders lack, we may place the compound eyes of the former. Our Arachnidans have simple eyes, consisting of a few—usually some half-dozen, or at most eight—specks scattered over the front part of the body; but they never possess the great masses of visual organs we familiarly see distending the sides of the head in the fly and other insects, and which constitute veritable wonders, upon which the entomologically-minded amongst us are never weary of expatiating in learned discourse.

So much for the *personnel* and distinguishing features of Arachne and her neighbours. A similar inquiry into the disposition and private character of the Arachnidan species would reveal much that was puzzling, and not a little that might prove inexplicable even in these days of ready theorising and explanatory speculation. Take as an example the domestic life of *Madame Tegenaria domestica*, as the lady-person domiciled in the corner of the room is named. There can exist no reasonable

doubt—indeed, there are no grounds whatever for doubting the statement—that Madame is thoroughly paramount, and that Mr. *Tegenaria domestica*, like not a few male animals inhabiting the highest spheres of society, is practically a nonentity, and might, without very great loss to Arachnidan society, be regarded as practically non-existent. The gentleman in question is rarely, if ever, seen within his domestic circle; and the difficulty connected with his movements and existence is that of ascertaining not merely when, but where he takes his walks abroad. The lady-spiders are, indeed, a race of viragos pure and simple. The most enthusiastic students of Arachnidan ways have never described those of the female sex as bland, and it is by no means a mythical or supposititious statement that the henpecked husbands are not merely frequently mauled in unmerciful fashion, but are actually devoured by their mates.¹ This is truly a horrible state of matters, but it is nevertheless true; and Arachnidan society appears tacitly to justify the extreme procedure last mentioned, and to regard the mysterious disappearance of a husband as an event which the lady most interested is entitled to regard with equanimity, if not as an utterly uninteresting proceeding. But if Madame Tegenaria and her blood relations are thus given to husband-slaughter in a wholesale way, it must not be imagined that the social feelings or affections are wholly unrepresented in Arachnidan society. There is a tacit agreement among the best friends and biographers of the race, that in the matter of affection for their progeny Mesdames Tegenariæ and friends are models of parents. The young appear to be tended and fed with scrupulous care, and the race before us presents thus a certain marked contrast to such cruel mothers as the queen bees which kill their daughters, and to the workers which kill the drones. The male spiders by all accounts are peripatetic and erratic in their ways, and wander about from nest to nest in a thoroughly Bohemian fashion. Statisticians inform us that the males as a rule preponderate in the Arachnidan race—an apparently wise provision, considering the frequency with which they are slaughtered by their mates. In one or two families, however, the female sex appears to predominate as in higher life, and Thorell, of Upsala, has left it on record that in his opinion the lady-spiders on the whole exceed their mates in numbers. Blackwall, in his work on the spiders, indicates that the males are darker-coloured, as a rule, than the females; but there are cases

¹ De Geer, as quoted by Kirby and Spence, tells us that he has witnessed an unfortunate husband 'seized by the object of his attentions, enveloped by her in a web, and then devoured; a sight which,' he adds, 'filled him with horror and indignation.'

where the male and female appear as exact counterparts one of another.

A chapter of high interest might be written on the courtship of the Arachnid race, involving, as do the matrimonial intents of the race, many curious features. In one or two species of spiders, the gentlemen possess the power of emitting a curious chirping sound, the ladies being, wonderful to relate, voiceless—a quality upon which Anacreon, as will be remembered, congratulated the insect-Cicadas, since their wives—as is really the case—are dumb. There is no doubt that such a musical apparatus, consisting of a roughened patch on the tail against which the chest is rubbed, is intended as a species of loving blandishment to captivate Mesdames. And Monsieur Theridion, approaching the domicile of Mademoiselle Theridion, softly twangs his guitar, and thus announces at once, and through the appropriate medium of the divine art, his intentions and emotions. Such a procedure reaches, it is true, in the insect group, a higher stage of culture than in the Arachnidan fraternity; but its occurrence anywhere in lower life affords a foundation for the belief, that courtship by serenade and the blandishments of Orpheus had plain precedents ages ago, in the loves of the insects and their allied kith and kin. So also, it has been alleged by high authority that spiders have been attracted by music. If this latter assertion be correct, it places the idea of a defined purpose underlying the sounds of Theridion on a basis of more than ordinary probability and reasonableness. Thus, in the matter of women's rights alone, the Arachnidans are all that, and perhaps a good deal more than, our own lady-liberationists could wish for; whilst there is no doubt that in attention to domestic duties, and in the ordering of household ways and domestic life—as occasionally proved by the experiences of mankind—the shrew may take precedence of some more amiable and milder-tempered wives.

The ways of spider existence can only be fully comprehended when we dip into the general anatomy of the group. Even the nature of the threads and thrums with the mention of which this rambling chronicle was begun, may be understood solely by the light thrown on the spinning-apparatus by a popular and short lecture on comparative anatomy. Let us thus firstly examine the mouth and its belongings, by way of satisfying a normal curiosity regarding the well-known sting and poison of the race. The jaws of a spider, like those of a beetle, number four—a large and a small pair. The large pair—technically the 'mandibles'—are hooked at their tips; the hooks being the poison-'fangs,' in each of which the duct or tube, leading from the poison-gland in the head,

terminates. When I discern Madame Tegenaria in her web, busily engaged in mastering the struggles of the fly which has just become entangled in the deceitful snare, I can predict that there will be both scant mercy and 'Jeddart justice' shown to the hapless victim. Soon the poison-fang will be plunged into its body; the deadly secretion will pass rapidly to mingle with the vital fluid, and *Musca domestica's* struggles will speedily cease. The bite of any known species of spider is certainly neither fatal nor dangerous to human life. At the very most, a spider's wound might produce an inflamed puncture; but the virus is not potent enough to affect human muscles, nerves, or tissues at large. Even the famed Tarantula itself is a delusion and a snare. The Tarantula spider is the *Lycosa tarantula* of Italy and Spain, whose bite was long believed to produce a species of dancing madness—imitated, of course, in the fashionable *Tarantelles* wherewith young aspirants in pianoforte practice torture at once their own fingers, the instrument in question, and the ears and minds of their hearers. The Tarantula is one of the wandering or peripatetic members of its race. Making no web, it hides beneath stones, and like a lurking bandit pounces upon its prey when occasion offers. 'Tarantism,' as the condition alluded to is named, unquestionably does exist as a species of uncontrollable muscular spasm; but the association of the affection with the bite of the spider in question is simply mythical, and rests on no certain or demonstrable basis. Arachnidans, however, are well provided with means of defence and offence suiting their life. The large tropical species can sting small birds to their death; and, in any case, the spider is a superior creature in this respect to its clumsy scorpion neighbour, which wanders hither and thither with its tail curled over its back by way of protecting its sting from injury: whilst a somewhat foolish trait of scorpion character is also known, wherein, when made to sting itself, the animal succumbs to its own injury.

But we are veering round gradually towards the threads and thrums, to the spinners and spun; and the inquiry, 'Where is the loom, and how does it work?' may now be said to await us. Let authority in the guise of the zoologist reply. Looking at the tail-extremity of a spider, we can readily perceive by aid of a strong lens from two to four pairs of conical projections. These are named the *spinnerets*. Each is but a much altered limb, and indeed, were proof of this latter statement required, we might point to one group of Arachnidans (*Hersilla*), in which the three pairs of spinnerets are seen to present a thoroughly leg-like nature. What, then, is the function of these spinnerets, which exist to the number of three pairs in Madame Tegenaria in the

corner? The reply is, that they are used to reel off the silk wherewith the domicile is woven and built. Microscopically examined, you would find that each spinneret is in reality composed of a multitude of very fine tubes, which open at its tip. Next let us inquire as to the mode of production of the thread. Our spiders are by no means the only weavers in nature. Those lazy gourmands the caterpillars, which cause the gardener's heart to grow faint when he contemplates their Sybaritic ravages on the choicest of his leaves, spin a thread likewise, and afford us 'floss' silk when the fabrication happens to be an infant moth belonging to one or other of the silk-producing species. And removed from the insect class altogether, and passing into the depths of the sea, we may still find spinners enough and to spare. The mussels of our own coasts, and the Pinnae of the Mediterranean Sea, present us with instances of animal weavers in plenty, and with examples of the manufacture of threads sometimes of a nature durable in the extreme.

But in insect or mollusc, in Arachnidan or caterpillar, there is a striking similarity in the manner of production of threads and fabrics. The material wherewith Madame Tegenaria spins is secreted or manufactured from her blood, like every other product of the animal economy, by special organs which receive the name of 'glands.' These silk-glands manufacture a dense semi-fluid matter which, so long as it remains within the gland, retains its fluid nature. When, however, it is exposed to the air, it becomes more tenacious, and is then capable of being pressed out through the infinitesimally fine tubes we have seen to compose the spinnerets. The conversion of a glutinous fluid into a thread is strictly paralleled by the familiar illustration of glue in a glue-pot. So long as the glue is kept heated on the fire, it is fluid; but if, when the process of liquefaction has proceeded to a certain stage, we lift the glue on the brush, we may draw out the semi-fluid mass in the form of threads into which it has rapidly cooled by exposure to the air. And so with the threads of Arachnidans. But if the spinnerets are perforated with numerous tubes through which the fluid silk is drawn to form threads, why do we not perceive the numerous threads in question? The zoologist replies that the many threads are united to form the single strand with which the web is formed and other operations of spider-life carried on. Think for a moment of the extreme fineness of this apparently single, but in reality compound, rope of Madame Tegenaria, for instance, and then try to imagine, if you can, the delicacy of the four hundred odd strands of which it is composed; or hie you to Madame *Epeira* in the garden, and try to conceive how infinitesimally slim

must be the thousand or so threads which make up her single strand, itself a mere gossamer string with which the summer breeze plays at will, and which even a gentle gust of wind mocks to its destruction. Scientific imagining has its limits, like the thoughts which run at will on mountains of vanity in common life; but in the face of the fineness of spiders' threads, we may well think of a boundary, not to the indivisibility of matter, but to our powers of following matter into its lesser and microscopic phases.

As Arachne spins her fabric, so insects spin their threads, and molluscs weave their thrums, as we shall see. But the manner in which this raw material—the thread—is wound and woven to form the domiciles of the spider tribe, awaits our further thought. Out in the garden exist plenty of spinners belonging to a very notable family—the *Epeiras*—whose web-spinning habits you may watch, provided you can extricate yourself sufficiently early from the toils of Morpheus, and sally forth in the early summer morning bent on a zoological study. You will then see *Epeira diademata* hard at work house-building and repairing, like a busy contractor with his hands full. Engaged on a new venture in the way of domicile, *Epeira* may be seen bustling hither and thither over the twigs and branches of the shrub whereto the web is to be attached, and, having fixed upon a site, may be seen suddenly to drop from the twig, and as suddenly to be arrested in some mysterious fashion in mid air. This is no mere acrobatic exhibition, but a preliminary measure probably having for its object the drawing of a mass of silken threads from the spinnerets. Soon the morning breezes waft the threads towards the projecting tips of neighbouring branches, to which they adhere; and when the threads have become fixed, you will see *Epeira* hauling at the threads with her fore legs like some deft sailor, by way of testing their strength. Selecting her special thread, *Epeira* will now probably cut adrift the remainder, and will turn her attention towards the stability of her line. This first thread runs across the centre or thereabouts of the future web—for you remember that *Epeira* spins a geometric house—and from the point of attachment of this first thread, *Epeira* will pass to fix the line, spun as she runs to point after point, and thus to mark out the circumference of her habitation. Next are formed diagonal lines across the outer circle already made; and soon a series of radiating threads is formed, and the outline or skeleton of the edifice is completed. In her journeys you will see, and I hope admire, how cleverly *Epeira*, like a skilful rope-walker, travels back to the centre of the web, along the line she has spun, and you will

notice also how her feet, or rather her toes, serve as most admirable tools and combs in arranging the threads and in fixing them as well.

The next portion of Epeira's task consists in the formation of the series of circular threads which pass from each of the spokes or radii of her wheel-like outline, and which convert the spaces between the spokes into veritable ladders. Proceeding to the centre, Epeira begins to spin a spiral thread, the whorls of which grow larger and larger as she approaches the circumference of her net. Round and round she weaves, crossing the radii in her spiral track, and deftly fastening the thread to each spoke as she crosses it, with a minute globule of some glutinous fluid. The larger the spider, the greater will be the space between the spirals of the web; and on approaching the circumference of her domicile, a second spiral thread seems to replace the first which began in the centre. This outer thread, as you may see by inspecting a web, is perfectly bedizened with globules of a gummy fluid, which, like the sundew's glittering secretion, will fast bind the unwary insect that comes in contact with the snare.¹ And thus Epeira makes her web, and lays a snare which Nature perfectly approves of, and authorises as one way of gaining an easy livelihood, and of placing the operator and builder well forward in the inevitable 'struggle for existence.'

But showers of rain and dust-storms sadly annoy our Epeira. Often a single shower will materially damage a web, and set the owner to work biting through the inner threads, which she rolls into a ball and then drops to the ground, and thereafter makes new spirals as before. Or dust-laden and wet, the domicile may be useless as a snare, and Epeira, deserting a ruined home, constructs a new dwelling-place, and appears in the genuine excitement of work to forget the troubles of the past.²

¹ Speaking of these globules, Mr. Blackwall writes: 'An estimate of the number of viscid globules distributed on the elastic spiral line in a net of *Epeira apodisa* of a medium size will convey some idea of the elaborate operations performed by the Geometric Spiders in the construction of their snares. The mean distance between two contiguous radii is about seven-tenths of an inch; if, therefore, the number 7 be multiplied by 20, the mean number of viscid globules which occur on one-tenth of an inch of the elastic spiral line at the ordinary degree of tension, the product will be 140, the mean number of globules deposited on seven-tenths of an inch of the elastic spiral line; this product multiplied by 24, the mean number of circumvolutions formed by the elastic spiral line, gives 3,360, (as) the mean number of globules contained between two radii; which multiplied by 26, the mean number of radii, produces 87,360, the total number of viscid globules in a finished net of average dimensions.'

² Judging, indeed, from the rapidity with which Epeira works, there should exist much leisure time and breathing space for the race, if the effects of work and the dissipation of energy in the Arachnid bear any relation to those seen in the

Watch Epeira, as she lies in wait for prey, realising Sir John Davies' apt description of her attitude:—

A subtle spider, which doth sit
In middle of her web which spreadeth wide;
If aught do touch the utmost thread of it,
She feels it instantly on every side.

Firm poised, sits Madame in the centre of her geometric spiral, usually head-downwards, but listening intently—albeit that we know nothing of her ears, which, perchance, like those of the lobster, may exist somewhere in or near the belongings or appendages of her head. With that sense of touch praised by him of Twickenham as so 'exquisitely fine,' and with each foot firm set on a radius or spoke of her web, Epeira waits for the coming fly. Soon the insect comes. A vibration passes along the cords from the sticky circumference where *Musca* is entangled in extreme perplexity of mind. At once Epeira is on the alert. Seizing several radiating threads, she sharply jerks them; and if the subsequent struggles of the captured one convince her that she has landed her prey, she will rapidly traverse the web towards the outside edge, seize the prey in her jaws, and instil her potent venom. Thereafter she will enclose her victim in a silken shroud, and dispose of him in some quiet corner, whither in due time she may retire to feast upon the juices and fluids of his frame. You will have witnessed in such a study, how greatly Epeira and indeed all Arachnidans depend on their sense of touch for information regarding the outer world. We know little or nothing of the seeing powers of those insignificant eye-specks scattered over the back of her head and chest, but we may readily conceive that the acute sense of touch, resident not merely in the palpi or feelers of the mouth, but in the legs as well, and which responds to every vibration, will very fully supply to the spider-race the place of the visual and other sensory organs of higher existence. Not a movement appears to be made by the ordinary Arachnidan without the accompanying work of spinning a thread. From place to place Epeira moves, quickly and deftly too, but ever accompanied by the thread which she who runs, spins. A friendly call—a practice which, by the way, is not much in vogue in Arachnidan society—would be performed by aid of the thread, the one extremity of which is secured at home, whilst the other end merges into the as yet unformed strands of the spinneret. Along this thread the return journey is made. From a height Epeira drops

human species. Mr. Blackwall says an *Epeira apodisa* will complete its web in about forty minutes, provided it meets with no interruption; and the rapidity with which spinnerets and legs move, and the work of thread-production proceeds, may best be proved by interviewing the artisans at home.

safely and securely by means of the well-nigh invisible strand, and up this thread she clammers with agility when danger looms or necessity drives. Thus does the Arachnidan literally live 'along the line,' and it is perhaps hard to conceive of any exactly similar mode of progression in the Animal world. Imagine an aerial humanity proceeding, on business or pleasure bent, by means of clothes-lines. Or think of the announcement made by a polite attendant that Madame Tegenaria's 'line' was at the door, and waiting to take her home; whilst, instead of the complaint that 'Madame Epeira's carriage stops the way,' it would be said that the lady's 'line' had got entangled with the threads of other members of society, and that the owner would oblige by speedily attending to its due arrangement.

The phases of Arachnidan society might, if pursued and described in detail, lead us very far from our room and our garden; but there remain for notice several features connected, firstly, with the varying habits of spinning and weaving seen in the class, and, secondly, with the nature of the instincts which the race of Epeiras, Tegenarias, and their friends, regarded as a whole, exhibit. Place for utilitarian considerations, and for the domestic economy of spiders' webs. During last century Le Bon of Languedoc wove spiders' silk into various articles, such as gloves and stockings. Bermuda ladies use spiders' silk for sewing, such strands being thick and strong. But spider-nature is by no means docile, and the domestication and civilisation of the errant race to become respectable fabricators of silk for the use of man is simply a dream of the future, which may or may not be realised. Only this much may be said, that Dr. B. G. Wilder of America asserts that the *Nephila plumipes* of the Southern States of America affords a silk which, could it be procured in sufficient quantities, would be a perfectly marketable commodity. It is the above-named species of *Nephila* which in tropic forests constructs nets of strength sufficient to capture small birds, and from this genus the Bermuda dames obtain sewing thread. The lady Nephilas are the workers; Messieurs the Nephilas are minute as compared with their spouses; and from what we already know of the degraded state of male society in the Arachnidan race, it would be too much to expect these wretched creatures to emulate the ways and industry of their literally giant partners.

A ramble through pastures Arachnidan calls up in imagination not a few curious and interesting forms to which a walk through the nearest museum of large dimensions, and a glance at the Arachnidan cases, will serve as a practical commentary and illustration. A summer day and a green meadow, with its waterpool

by the clump of osiers, rises to mental view as we recall to mind the *Argyroneta* we saw there—this last being a spider which takes to water as its natural habitat, and which builds a nest and cocoon beneath the surface in the shape of a veritable diving-bell. Here this amphibian lady lives and thrives, ascending periodically to the surface of the pool to entangle a bubble of air in the hairs with which her body is covered, and to descend with this atmospheric supply to her nest. Then, also, we are reminded of the ‘Wanderers,’ which, making no web or nest, lurk beneath stones and rush out to seize their prey, like the *Tarantula* of evil fame. And we remember the Leaping Spiders (*Salticus*); so named because they progress with a leaping gait, and recall to mind certain insect-brethren of the hearth and meadow. Nor must we neglect to mention the *Mygale* tribe or Mason Spiders, which construct the trap-door abodes so familiar in Southern Europe; excavating a deep pit which is lined with the silken material, and closed by a cunningly contrived and cleverly concealed lid. Whilst, lastly, may be mentioned Madame *Clotho*, well named after the Fate, since of the spinners and weavers she might well represent the chief, or an embodiment of *Arachne* herself. Here you will find a weaver which constructs a tent of a fine taffeta, secures it to the ground with silken cords, and stains the outside so as to mimic accurately the hue of the surrounding objects. Herein the *Clotho* family lives; herein the young are reared; and herein are exercised those instincts which puzzle us the more as we continue to dwell upon the variety and perfection of their work.

So we bid farewell to the spinners and weavers, *en famille*, and approach at least part of the philosophy of their being. The spider may, in one sense, be well compared to a headless insect; the organs and parts constituting the insect head—always a well-defined part of the economy in question—are but imperfectly developed in the spider-race. But on all grounds our spider is an animal of much higher instincts than the average insect. Wary to a fault, strategic in the highest degree, cunning in every detail of life, active and mechanically minded—such qualities, I repeat, would naturally be regarded as the outcome and work of a nervous system higher than that of the careless insect the current of whose existence, as a rule, flows evenly along. Now, in nature, there exist such principles as type and likeness, whereby each animal belonging to any given group, preserves beneath variations in form, the typical or primary disposition of parts seen in the least modified members of its class. Worms, insects, centipedes, crabs, lobsters, and a host of other and allied creatures, fall into one and

the same group. In the worm and insect, the nervous system exists typically as a double chain of nerves and nerve-knots lying along the floor of the body. Now, Arachnidan society, in virtue of its relations to the insect-type, is bound to possess a nervous system of like character. And so we find the guiding apparatus of the spider to be situated below. But when we scan the form of that nervous system we seem to lose sight of the double or single-chain arrangement just mentioned as characteristic of the insect-class and its allies, for we notice the spider's nerves to form a great mass in the floor of its head and chest. How and why has this altered arrangement been produced? The answer is clear. To produce a nervous system of higher type than that of the insect, two courses were open to Dame Nature. She might have supplied Arachne with additional nerves and nerve-knots; but such a procedure, as we have just observed, is against the rules, which forbid any great departure from a given type. Or, secondly, Nature might, by *concentrating* otherwise scattered nerve-centres, give increased nerve-power. And this latter alternative has been duly pursued in the case of our spiders. Increased centralisation of nerves has afforded increased nerve-power, and hence we perceive a natural basis for replying to the query concerning the origin of the higher powers of Arachne as compared with the average insect. That spiders and insects may have had a common origin is by no means a far-fetched supposition. Insects, as they are entitled to claim by reason of their older fossil history, may take the first place; but it is not difficult to conceive that from some primitive insect-like stock the tribe of spinners and weavers descended in the far-back ages; whilst here and there, as in the spinning insect-caterpillars, or in that poor relation of the centipedes named *Peripatus*—which spins threads when alarmed by way, presumably, of showing its fear and disgust—we also meet with traces of a development of spinning powers, imitating in feeble degree only the more perfect workmanship of the beings which claim the purple-dyer's daughter as their patron and mythological heroine.

But little space remains wherein the spinners of threads and thrums amongst the shell-fish may receive a just meed of attention. Still, to pass over these molluscan fabricators in silence would seem to cast a slur on their handiwork, although their labours may seem but dull and commonplace after the lively land-weavers of nets and webs. Perhaps the best-known spinner of threads on our own coasts is the common mussel, which one may pick up by the dozen on rocky coasts, having bound to itself, by means of its strong threads, stones and shells, often making up a

mass many times its own weight and bulk. Try to detach a mussel from a secure crevice in a rock where it lies hidden along with numerous neighbours, and your weary fingers will attest the strength of the mussel's 'beard,' as its collection of threads is popularly named—the '*byssus*' of those whose business it is to lecture upon big and little fish alike. Whence does the 'beard' come, and how is it formed? Open your mussel—for the more familiar oyster has no beard, at least when adult, and prefers to fix itself in its 'bed' directly, by implanting its shell in its native mud. You will then see a prominent organ of conical shape, and deeply grooved in appearance. This is the 'foot' of your mollusc, an organ more familiarly seen in the broad walking-disc of that retiring mollusc the snail or slug. And it is a 'foot' identical in nature with that of the mussel by means of which the familiar cockle leaps over its sandy habitation, and by aid of which the Soten or razor-shell burrows swiftly and deeply into the obscurity of the sand.

From the base of the foot hangs the bundle of stout threads which this foot moulds and forms. The 'foot' is thus the weaver of the mussel's beard, and the manner of secretion of the threads takes place in a fashion quite analogous to that in which the spider makes its thread. From special glands forming part of the mussel's belongings, comes the same semi-fluid material, which, run into the groove in the foot, sets therein as a firm thread. This thread is drawn out of the foot by the retraction of that organ, and another thread is rapidly formed, until the 'beard' grows apace, and the mussel has tied itself to something, or has tied something to itself, as we have seen.

The 'beard' of the mussel as a zoological curiosity is interesting enough, no doubt, but that it could by any stretch of the imagination be regarded as subserving an important function in defending man's structures against the ravages of time and tide, is altogether an unlikely supposition. Listen, however, to a recital, as quoted by Mr. Gosse in his manual of the '*Mollusca*':—
'At the town of Bideford in Devonshire, there is a long bridge of twenty-four arches across the Torridge river, near its junction with the Taw. At this bridge the tide flows so rapidly that it cannot be kept in repair by mortar. The corporation, therefore, keep boats in employ to bring mussels to it, and the interstices of the bridge are filled by hand with these mussels. It is supported from being driven away by the tide entirely by the strong threads these mussels fix to the stonework; and by an Act or grant, it is a crime liable to transportation for any person to remove these mussels, unless in the presence and by the consent of the corporation

trustees.' Such a history is both curious and interesting, and in the absence of any contradiction—Mr. Gosse's 'Manual' bears date 1854—the correctness of the narrative may be assumed, if only from an inductive inference concerning the strength of the byssus of the mussels on the beach. The story, besides, presents but another and perhaps novel illustration of the old axiom, *L'union fait la force*.

Utilitarianism may again claim us when we find that a near neighbour of the mussel—the Mediterranean Pinna—manufactures a silky byssus in sufficient quantity to enable the Sicilians to weave it into gloves and stockings. These latter are rather *articles de luxe*, however, than garments of wear, and are costly withal; the latter fact depending on the nature of their origin and the trouble of manufacture. Pope Benedict XV. received in 1754 from certain of his subjects a pair of stockings of Pinna's 'beard,' and the event was regarded as testifying to the worth of the present and to the dexterity of the manufacturers—a dexterity which was certainly equalled in respect of its ingenuity by Dame Nature herself in the production of the raw material.

This history of threads and thrums draws to a close. Madame Tegenaria is busy in her corner still. It was she who inspired this subject and its title, and I think of bestirring myself, in common gratitude, to capture that buzzing insect, whose disturbing hum must reach Arachnidan society in the corner, and fill it with vain hopes of a goodly banquet. I shall, at any rate, say farewell to the history of Tegenaria and her race for the nonce. Some other day Arachnidan ways and customs may engage an hour of leisure-time. In her corner Tegenaria may live and prosper, it is true—but the inevitable duster looms in the distance, and of the fate which may possibly await our deft spinner—who can tell?

Doctor Barberon :

THE STORY OF A FRENCH TRIAL FOR MURDER.

I.

I WAS staying a few years ago in a town on the western coast of France, when I became the unwilling witness of a strange judicial drama. Having visited the town in question several successive years, at the season of sea-bathing, I had got acquainted with the principal inhabitants, and among them with a local doctor named Barberon. He was not a pleasant man, though, having had to consult him for a member of my family, I found him cleverer than any of his colleagues in the place. His defects were a want of geniality, great irritability, and an offensive tendency to self-assertion. He had few patients and fewer friends.

I used often to meet Dr. Barberon at the club; and his shortness of temper betrayed itself whenever we played whist. He could not lose without saying offensive things to his partner, or else he would sulk absurdly. I thought for a while that he cared more to win from vanity than from interest in our small stakes; and this idea was confirmed when I saw that he grew savage if thwarted in any way. He could not join in a discussion without trying to argue down his opponents, and he always had the last word, either because he marched off impatiently without waiting for a reply, or because his contradictors gave in from weariness. When I first met him he was about thirty-five—a strong-built man of middle height, with clear-cut features and very bright blue eyes. These eyes were the most remarkable things in him. Their look was hard and restless; and when he was angry their glare almost terrified one. I have said that Dr. Barberon was clever: I might have stated that he was a man of genius, who but for his weaknesses would have made his way in life, for he was an original thinker and very well informed on all matters of science. When he spoke of things within his knowledge he could be instructive; but if one were carried away into temporary admiration of him by some brilliant dissertation in which his genius broke out in flashes, Dr. Barberon soon
 I antipathy again by his insufferable
 by complaining that A—— was no place
 that he ought to be in Paris. He was
 hours of wealth, and of professional
 self forward as candidate whenever a

post of any sort—whether a hospital physicianship, or a seat in the municipal council—fell vacant. Being always unsuccessful, his disappointments only soured him the more, and made him think, with the usual infatuation of vain men, that a strong party of persons jealous of his merits were conspiring to keep him down.

There were two men whom Dr. Barberon especially hated and accused of intriguing against him : these were the two other practitioners in A——, Dr. Legris and Dr. Lenoir. The former was a good-humoured sly old man, very fond of good dinners and gossip, but too secure of his popularity to have any need for damaging a rival ; the latter was a sedate, painstaking and rather priggish young man who had inherited a first-rate practice from his father, and found quite enough to do in attending to the patients he had without coveting more. Both these gentlemen had ceased to be on speaking terms with Barberon, and some inconvenience resulted in cases where it was necessary to call a third physician into consultation ; for Barberon was always that third. If the three met at the club, Dr. Legris ignored his colleague's presence and went on jesting and playing his cards as if he were not present ; but Dr. Lenoir would walk out gloomily.

Like most French professional men, Dr. Barberon had contracted a *mariage de convenance*, setting greater store by the dower of 100,000 francs which his wife had brought him than by the lady herself. These marriages, or partnerships, do not as a rule turn out badly, for as there is no possibility of severing them by divorce, both parties try to make the best of their bargain, and by dint of mutual forbearance sometimes become fast friends, if not lovers. Dr. Barberon's wife was a good little woman who patiently bore with her husband's infirmities of temper, and though it was said that she was unhappy, this was mere conjecture ; for she was never heard to utter a complaint even to her own relatives. One year whilst I was at A—— Madame Barberon, who had been ailing for some time past, died suddenly during a premature confinement. Considering how weak she had been of late, nobody was much surprised, and some sympathy was extended to her husband, who behaved as though he felt his bereavement deeply. The next year, on my return to A——, I learned that Dr. Barberon was engaged to be married to a wealthy widow of forty, whose influence had already procured for him a post as Inspector of Government Charities ; and it was then that those events occurred which I am about to narrate.

A rumour arose that Dr. Barberon had murdered his first wife in order to marry the widow, and to obtain a heavy insurance. Who first breathed the suspicion there was no saying, for nobody

came forward deliberately as an accuser; but in an incredibly short space of time whisperings ran all over the town, and it was hinted that Madame Barberon's body ought to be exhumed. Here it should be mentioned that there is no such official as a Coroner in France; and that, moreover, professional etiquette does not forbid doctors from tending their own wives in illness. Madame Barberon had been treated solely by her husband; and at her death the causes to which he attributed her decease were entered, without question, in the certificate signed by the Municipal Physician, who was Dr. Lenoir. This is always the way in which matters are managed in France. When a person dies the Municipal Doctor comes 'to verify the demise;' but, out of courtesy towards his colleague who treated the patient, he signs a certificate in conformity with the statements made by the said colleague. His verification is consequently an idle formality. He does no more than glance at the face of the corpse; but would fear to be thought fussy if he put searching questions, or examined the body for marks of violence; or still more so if he ordered a *post mortem*. Thus in the great majority of poisoning cases that occur (and they have been very numerous of late years), the crime has only come to light through the gossip of neighbours, which has begun after the body was buried. How many murders have remained undiscovered through the laxity in the system of verification is a point upon which one need not speculate.

Dr. Lenoir had certified that Madame Barberon's death was due to 'natural causes.' As soon, however, as the Public Prosecutor heard of the sinister reports that were flying abroad, he acted with the vigilant promptitude which characterises officials of his class and issued an order for exhumation. At the same time he summoned Dr. Barberon, and, after questioning him in private, bade him hold himself at the disposal of justice—in other words, made him a prisoner at large with injunctions not to leave the town. Next the Procureur issued a search warrant which assigned the doctor's house to the custody of detectives, who forthwith took possession of all papers, phials, instruments, &c., and forbade the owner to enter any room but the bed-chamber and dressing-room, both of which they had previously overhauled.

All this took place on a day in August, and in the evening I returned as usual to the club, where everybody was discussing the startling event. It was in stifling hot weather, but this did not prevent the conversation from being highly animated. Already some feeling convinced that Barberon was capable of committing the crime. Among those who held out

most stoutly for the doctor's guilt was an old half-pay officer, Colonel Tranchot, who was the most excellent creature alive, but very obstinate when he had conceived a prejudice. He had never liked Barberon.

'Stuff, sir!' said he to the leader of the local bar, Maître Farcy, who had taken Barberon's side. 'Stuff, sir! if my wife were to die to-morrow, nobody would accuse me of having murdered her. There are only certain sorts of men upon whom such suspicions fall, and they are always black sheep.'

Maître Farcy remarked that justice sometimes made errors, and that he had himself often pleaded for wrongly accused persons whom juries had acquitted.

'That only proves that you can manage juries,' said the Colonel. 'I don't believe that justice commits errors. It may sometimes charge a man amiss with some particular offence, but he will be sure to have been guilty of something else.'

'I should not like to see you chief judge in our Court, Colonel,' observed the barrister, smiling.

'I have sat as judge on courts-martial, sir,' responded old Tranchot, 'and I have never met with a prisoner yet who had not foul antecedents when you looked into them. Charge a man with stealing a pig, and it's odds but that he will be proved to have stolen a whole drove before he was ever suspected.'

'That comes of the habit which our Procureurs have of raking up all the mud in a prisoner's past life,' maintained Farcy.

'They might rake up all *my* past life and they would not find one flake of mud,' cried the Colonel, striking his bosom. 'No, sir; my notion of a good character is a thing clean as the plate off which you eat. I wish to be known among my friends and enemies, not only as a man who has never committed a crime, but as one who could under no conceivable circumstances commit one; so that even if evidence pointed against me, my good name should be enough to bear me innocent. Yes, sir;' and the Colonel, who was red in the face, wagged his head at the lawyer.

Maître Farcy made no answer, for at this moment the door of the card-room, where we were talking, was abruptly opened, and Dr. Barberon walked in. His entry produced as much sensation as if it had been that of a wolf. I shall never forget the look he cast at us, one of defiant inquiry, contempt, and exasperation. His features were flushed, and he made a step or two, then paused with his hat in his hand as if he were an actor on the stage.

'I suppose you have been discussing my villainies?' he exclaimed in a dry, sarcastic voice. 'You have all made up your minds that I murdered my wife?'

'No-o,' murmured Maitre Farcy and some others; but Colonel Tranchot and his party remained silent.

'I don't care what you think of me,' cried Barberon hotly. 'This is an infernal machination of my enemies. Because I am not an idiot and a sycophant like themselves, fawning from house to house for patients—because I am wont to speak out my mind plainly without fear of persons, they hate me; and now that I was about to rise to a position in life where I should have overtopped them all, they have sprung this mine to ruin me. That is the whole secret.'

'You cannot be ruined if you are innocent,' remarked old Colonel Tranchot bluntly.

'You think that, do you?' retorted Barberon with a shrug. 'As if there were not dolts enough, who, whenever a man is accused, pretend that "there is no smoke without fire!" (Here the Colonel gave a jump.) How can I continue to reside in a place where such an accusation has been levelled against me? What man would trust, and what woman marry me? Ah, those envious scoundrels well knew what they were about when they dealt me this treacherous blow!'

As if overcome by the prospect in store for him, Dr. Barberon pressed his hand to his brow and groaned. I could not help feeling for him. After a moment he raised his glance in search of some sympathetic face, and descrying me standing beside Maitre Farcy, he advanced and began to speak to us volubly.

He must have become unconscious of where he was, for he addressed us in an excited, confidential way as though there were no one else in the room.

He expatiated on the disappointments he had endured in his married life: his late wife was a weak-witted person of querulous temper, who had never understood him; but all the same he had treated her kindly and had tended her with the utmost devotion in her last sickness. Then he dwelt on his early struggles in his profession. He had never had a patron or a friend; from his school-days he owed everything to his own perseverance; and now, when at last he had obtained an honourable post and had won the affection of a woman whom he loved, and who was fitted to be his helpmate, the cup of his happiness was to be dashed down by the vile hand of calumny. It was too hard—by heavens, it was cruel! . . .

The clock on the mantelshelf struck ten while Dr. Barberon was inveighing against his fate, and he broke off:—

'I must be gone,' he said, consulting his watch. 'They are going to disinter my poor wife to-night, and I have been ordered to attend that I may be confronted with her remains. My God, they

want to drive me mad!’ . . . and without paying further attention to any of us, he hurried from the room.

‘That man is innocent,’ remarked Maitre Farcy positively.

‘Before six months are past that man will be guillotined,’ answered Colonel Tranchot.

II.

THE widow whom Dr. Barberon was to marry was a Madame Perreau : a handsome woman of pleasing address, who might have passed for being thirty instead of forty. She came every year to A——, bringing a numerous suite of servants and her little girl, who, at the time of the events I am relating, was ten years old. This child, Aglae by name, was a pale large-eyed mite in delicate health, upon whom her mother doted. She seemed to have taken a great fancy for Dr. Barberon, who, on his side, appeared to cherish her more than any creature alive, and had always been unremitting in his attendance on her. The widow said that it was owing to his care that Aglae had not died of consumption, and she hinted that it was partly from gratitude that she was going to marry him, partly too that her child might find in Dr. Barberon a second father, willing as well as able to look after her health. It is certain that Madame Perreau would have married no man whom her little daughter disliked ; but maternal solicitude was not enough by itself to account for the blooming widow’s desire to take a second husband. All who knew her agreed that she was a sociable woman, not fitted to live alone.

Possibly she had conceived a sincere admiration for Dr. Barberon, for women judge men with different eyes from ours. The doctor’s vanity, his outbursts of temper, his splenetic invectives against imaginary foes, may have struck her as the outpourings of a mind full of genius. Then, like a warm-hearted woman as she was, it may have flattered her to think that her wealth would be the means of opening a grand career to the man who had wooed her. Madame Perreau’s life so far had been rather a strange one. Her first husband, M. Perreau, was a Parisian café proprietor, who had kept her ignorant of the fact that he was amassing a large fortune by speculations on the Bourse. During her ten years of married life, Madame Perreau had sat behind the counter in her husband’s café, adding up accounts and serving out liqueurs ; but on becoming a widow, she had unexpectedly stepped into an income of about 8000*l.* a year. The change from comparative drudgery to affluence soon consoled her for the loss of a husband who was many years older than herself, and, by all accounts, not a very amiable consort ; so

that as soon as her year's mourning was ended, she set out on a round of travels to gay cities and watering places. But the pleasures of travelling pall after a few years, and Madame Perreau, who had her child's future establishment in view, bethought her of settling down in some place where she might become the centre of a respectable social circle. For this purpose it was necessary that she should remarry. As the rich widow of a publican she was likely to meet with more sycophants than friends; but as the wife of a rising doctor, who might attain to political honours by becoming a deputy, she could lead a very agreeable existence amid select company, and eventually make a capital match for her daughter. That is why she had decided upon becoming Madame Barberon.

Madame Perreau was not a foolish woman. For all her love of showy dresses, luxuries, and amusements, she had a good deal of commercial shrewdness, and never acted without reflection. I suspect that before accepting Dr. Barberon she had taken his moral measure and satisfied herself that she should be able to manage him; whilst he, after studying the widow, must have made up his mind that it would be good for him to be ruled by such a person. Vain men, who are generally moral cowards, deficient in will-power, feel the need of a strong, womanly judgment to rely on, and Dr. Barberon's first wife had failed to afford him such a prop. She was weak, and let him have his own way, even when it was detrimental to him; Madame Perreau, who was not a woman to be bullied, would oblige her husband to exercise a self-control which would benefit his interest; and so there was no reason why they should not be happy together.

Under these circumstances the charge of murder brought against Dr. Barberon fell upon the widow's schemes like a thunder-bolt.

I believe all the town had been talking over the affair, before the least rumour of it reached Madame Perreau; for I saw her walking about in public on Barberon's arm several days after the latter was aware of what was bruited against him. Every morning, when it was fine, the widow and her little girl used to go to the Casino to take their sea-baths; in the afternoon they returned very smartly attired, and sat on the terrace overlooking the beach, while the band played. Barberon was always with them. He may have hoped that the evil wind would blow over, and that he would thus be spared the pain, from which his vanity shrank, of letting Madame Perreau learn that he was accused of an odious crime. However, on the day when he was summoned before the Public Prosecutor, he could keep the secret no longer. He called on the widow and explained in what predicament he stood; and even as

he was pouring his angry tale into her horrified ears, a police officer arrived with a mandate ordering Madame Perreau to appear before the Procureur to undergo interrogations on the morrow. All this took place about a couple of hours before Dr. Barberon came to the club where occurred the scene already described.

I left the club twenty minutes after Barberon; and M. Farcy accompanied me. We lodged in the same quarter of the town, and our way lay past the villa which Madame Perreau rented. As we approached we perceived that the house was in great confusion. Lights gleamed in all the windows; servants were hurrying to and fro; and there stood a fly at the door with some luggage already piled on the roof.

'That woman is going to do a silly thing,' remarked Farcy, stopping on the pavement. 'If she bolts, she will harm Barberon and herself too. I think I'll go in and warn her.'

'She may not like your interference,' I observed, taking my British view of duty towards one's neighbour.

'Women require advice in these scrapes,' replied the barrister: 'women act in a panic without foreseeing consequences. Come in; don't let us argue when it is a question of doing a kindness.'

Maitre Farcy was a burly, impulsive, rather slovenly man, who, from forensic habit, was always on the side of those whom justice vexed. He had defended hundreds of prisoners, and, being always arrayed against the Public Prosecutor, had come to look upon that functionary as his natural enemy. I do not think that he was actuated in the present instance by any desire to play a part in what he foresaw might be a *cause célèbre* (though of course to provincial advocates such causes are a godsend), but he knew Madame Perreau, and liked her. I also knew her, and followed Farcy into the house, feeling sorry for the widow, and somewhat curious to see how she would bear herself. It was eight o'clock, and not too late for paying a visit, according to French etiquette.

The first thing we saw in the front hall was little Aglae muffled up in wraps, and crying bitterly. She sat forlorn on a portmanteau with no one to attend to her, for the servants were all racing about with boxes and parcels. We passed into the drawing-room, and found Madame Perreau in a travelling dress and bonnet, packing things feverishly into a dressing-bag. Her features were discomposed from fright, and her mind was so far away from her occupation that she picked up things without looking at them, stowing away valuables and trifles pell-mell. She glanced up as we entered, and, reading sympathy on our faces, let her hands drop to her side and moved her lips in a nervous twitching; then she tottered to a

chair and burst into tears, hiding her face in her handkerchief:— ‘Oh! this is dreadful!’ she sobbed. ‘What am I to do? Have you ever heard such a thing as this accusation of murder?’

‘Do not be distressed, Madame Perreau,’ said Farcy soothingly. ‘Everything will come right if you bear up. But you must not think of running away.’

‘Am I to stay here, then, to be harried with questions?’ cried the widow, rocking herself. ‘The Procureur has sent me a summons.’

‘Reason the more for obeying it. If you fled he might have you brought back by the police.’

‘Oh! but I will fly the country, and never set foot in it again. What have I done? Who can stop me? Am I to be pointed out in the streets, and tortured in a witness-box? Perhaps they will try to make out that I was an accessory to this murder—’ and appalled by this thought the widow sprang to her feet and went on with her packing.

‘I hope there has been no murder, and that there will be no trial,’ suggested Farcy.

‘There must have been some ground for the charge, or it would not have been made,’ said Madame Perreau drily. ‘Dr. Barberon has told me a long, rambling story, which I cannot understand; and I will never forgive him for having placed me in this predicament—never!’

This was unreasonable, but the widow seemed to have no commiseration to bestow on the luckless doctor. All her concern was for herself and her daughter. She was suddenly seized with terror at not seeing Aglae in the room, and ran to the door to call her. Aglae came in with her knuckles in her eyes, and her voice choked with sobs—at which desolate sight the mother’s tears burst out afresh, and she clasped the child in her arms, crying over her, and vowing that no powers of earth should part them: ‘Don’t grieve, my darling,’ she said, ‘mamma will remain with you, and we will go away from the wicked men who want to harm us.’ . . . It was at once pitiful and touching to hear her.

However, when the first burst of Madame Perreau’s emotion had spent itself, I ventured to join my voice to Farcy’s, and to point out what damage she would do to Dr. Barberon if she did not stay to testify what she could in his favour. Our words seemed to produce an impression on her.

‘Very well, I will stay,’ she said at last, with a sort of impatience: ‘I will say what I can for him, but that will not be much.’

‘If you can speak to his character, that will probably be

enough,' remarked Farcy. 'I doubt whether the affair will be carried to a trial.'

'Oh, I am convinced they will try him, and I dare say they will find him guilty,' replied the widow obdurately; 'but whether or no, I hope you will do *your* best for the unhappy man, M. Farcy.'

'If I am asked to defend him, I will,' answered the barrister. 'But once again, I trust he will return to you to-morrow, quite purged of this charge.'

'I will never receive him in my house again,' exclaimed the widow with resolution. 'How could I marry a man suspected of poisoning his first wife? I should have shudders whenever I was alone with him. However,' added she, as if speaking to herself, 'I am convinced that if Dr. Barberon did murder his wife, he was mad at the time.'

After this Madame Perreau wished us good night. Evidently her desire was to get rid of us; and we accepted the hint. But as we issued from the pretty villa on which such a blight had fallen, Farcy remarked that he did not believe in the widow's promise of staying. 'Madame Perreau has some secret in her past life which she does not wish to have wormed out of her in court,' said he. 'I am sure she will slip her cable.'

In this he was right, for half an hour after our departure Madame Perreau and her daughter were driven to the railway station; and by daybreak they were in Paris, on their road to the Belgian frontier.

III.

MEANWHILE the body of Madame Barberon had been exhumed in the presence of her husband, a Commissioner of Police and four gendarmes.

By the light of the lanterns flickering under a moonless sky in the quiet cemetery of A—— the vault was opened and the coffin was hauled up. A hearse was in waiting to convey it to the dissecting room of the local hospital. Two gendarmes, with their carbines reversed, marched in front of the vehicle; the two others fell in behind; in the rear came a fly bearing Barberon and the Commissaire girt with a tricolour sash. The gloomy procession wended its way down a steep road in a cliff skirting the sea-shore, in sight of the waves tumbling on the shingle. The most round-about route was chosen that no crowds might be attracted; and ten o'clock had struck when the hospital was reached.

Here Barberon was to be subjected to the ordeal of confronta-

tion with his wife's corpse—a form of moral torture which is always applied to suspected murderers in the hope that it may induce sudden remorse and confession. The coffin was laid on the stone table of the amphitheatre, under the glare of powerful gas-burners. A pan full of some fumigating substance diffused a strange aroma through the cold place; and the scene derived a tragical look from the array of surgical instruments spread out on a side-table, and from the presence of two surgeons in white aprons, whose shirt-sleeves were turned above their elbows. One of these was an expert in toxicology who had been telegraphed for from Paris; and his colleague had been delegated by the Insurance Office in which the late Madame Barberon's life had been insured. The other persons in attendance were Doctors Legris and Lenoir, some hospital servants; and a small grey-headed Juge d'Instruction, with gold spectacles, who conducted the proceedings in a dry authoritative voice. His name was Vrillard, and he was skilled in all the inquisitorial subtleties of his profession.

'Open the coffin,' he said, as soon as Barberon had been introduced; and the dull noise of chisels was heard prising off the wooden lid which had been swollen by a year underground.

Dr. Barberon, who was frightfully pale, sank into a chair and held his head between his hands as if to keep it from bursting. A man of the strongest nerves might well have been cowed by the horror of this situation. When the coffin-lid had been removed, the attendants raised the corpse in its damp discoloured winding sheet, and M. Vrillard said sternly: 'Look, sir, do you recognise the body of your wife?'

'My God!' exclaimed Barberon, struggling to his feet and fixing an affrighted gaze on the vacant eye-sockets that seemed to stare at him. But the sight was too ghastly, and he put up his hand to shut it out. 'What barbarous cruelty this is!' he moaned.

'If you murdered this poor woman you may partially atone, and perhaps obtain mercy of men, by making a full confession,' said the Juge d'Instruction, counting out each of his words slowly.

'I have nothing to confess. I am being inhumanly treated,' answered Barberon, who was beside himself.

'Then you maintain that your wife died a natural death?' inquired M. Vrillard amidst a poignant silence.

'I do: if these gentlemen discover poison in the body, somebody else will have put it there. It was not I. It will have been done to ruin me.'

'Enough. Gentlemen, you may proceed with your examination,' said M. Vrillard, addressing the surgeons. 'You, sir, must retire; but do not leave the building.'

He made a sign to the Commissioner of Police, who was standing near the door, and that functionary escorted Barberon to another chamber, where he left him in the custody of a detective. Then the dissecting operations commenced. The Juge d'Instruction took the seat which Barberon had vacated, and drew out a note-book and pencil. He offered no remarks, and watched all that went on with unobtrusive attention, like one who bides his hour; but every time one of the medical men let fall an observation he jotted it down.

The examination was long, and the four doctors were far from being unanimous. They managed to disagree at starting about the order in which the chemical tests should be applied. The physician who represented the Insurance Office was positive that he could detect signs of arsenic; the expert in toxicology doubted whether a doctor would have used such a tell-tale poison as that. Dr. Lenoir being appealed to as to the symptoms which he had noticed when certifying to the causes of death, stoutly maintained that he had observed nothing that indicated foul play. This young doctor's reputation was in some sense at stake, owing to the certificate he had signed, and this drew him to Barberon's side. For other reasons, old Dr. Legris likewise sided with Barberon. His antipathy against the latter was so notorious—the two had so often mocked or abused each other—that Legris was afraid of being thought to yield to animus if he joined in the cry against his unhappy colleague: the shrewd old practitioner saw that he would have a better chance of earning public esteem if he played the magnanimous.

So there were all the elements for a pretty medical quarrel between the four men of science who had met to cut up the poor young woman's body, and search for traces of a crime amongst its decayed organs.

At last, however, after a minute examination which was protracted till morning—for some of the experiments could only be performed by daylight—a testing apparatus revealed the presence of arsenic: and then the question arose as to whether this quantity was sufficient to have caused death. The Parisian expert, agreeing now with the Insurance doctor, thought that it was; Doctors Legris and Lenoir, but especially the latter, took the opposite view. In the upshot, the quarrel, which was carried on warmly, was cut short by the Juge d'Instruction, who had sat all through the night taking his notes with imperturbable patience.

'Gentlemen,' he interposed, rising, 'the question which you are debating is one for a jury to decide. The moment you have

ascertained that there is arsenic in the body, justice must discover how it got there.'

'I think it is very hard, though, that a medical man should be accused of murder on such flimsy evidence as this,' demurred old Dr. Legris; and then, making a sort of sentimental appeal to the two Parisians, he urged that doctors ought to stand by one another: 'For the honour of our profession, it should not go forth that there are murderers amongst us.'

'Stop, sir; I must take those words down,' said the Juge d'Instruction, frowning. 'They amount to a contention that out of *esprit de corps* you would feel justified in shielding a criminal.'

'I don't say that, but where one of my own cloth was concerned I would not judge rashly or ungenerously,' replied Dr. Legris, who was not sorry to let it be recorded that he had sturdily taken his enemy's part.

'Well, I agree with Monsieur Vrillard,' said the Parisian expert, who was washing his hands. 'I think the case should go to trial. We will send in our report: it will be for the Court to pronounce upon it.'

'For my part I emphatically protest against the conclusion at which these gentlemen have arrived,' declared young Dr. Lenoir with animation. 'I say so now, and I will repeat my reasons in the witness-box.'

'You are in a measure on your defence yourself, sir,' retorted the Juge d'Instruction curtly: 'don't forget that a heavy responsibility lies at your door for having signed a certificate without due inquiry. I will now go and inform Dr. Barberon that he is a prisoner.'

Doctors Legris and Lenoir wanted to accompany the magistrate in order to assure the accused man that they did not share the opinion of the Parisian experts; but this M. Vrillard would not permit. The prisoner was now in his hands to be confined, questioned, worried, and debarred from all intercourse with his fellows until such time as the evidence against him was complete. The Juge went out attended by the Commissaire, and they summoned the four gendarmes, who were still on the premises, that the arrest of Barberon might be rendered more impressive. The brigadier of the escort produced a pair of handcuffs.

Barberon had spent a sleepless night, pacing about the hospital room and talking to himself in great agitation. The detective who had charge of him thought him intoxicated. He clenched his fists, uttered imprecations, railed at imaginary accusers, and so exhausted himself that in the morning he was hoarse and haggard like a man in a fever. When the door opened and he saw the

Commissaire and the Juge walk in, followed by the gendarmes with their cocked hats and carbines, he understood that it was all up with him, and the blood flushed to his face. He stood in the middle of the room with his arms folded, and a defiant curl on his lips, while the Commissaire said: 'In the name of the Law I arrest you.'

'Concealment is useless now, so you had better confess,' added the Juge d'Instruction coldly. 'The experts have discovered arsenic in your wife's body.'

'They have found arsenic—O the fools!' exclaimed Barberon with a sardonic laugh. 'Why, I defy anybody to prove symptoms of arsenical poisoning! Wouldn't our servant have noticed my wife's symptoms—wouldn't Dr. Lenoir have perceived suspicious signs when he came to view the corpse? and is it likely that I, a doctor, who know the action of drugs, should have chosen that one of all others which leaves most traces?'

'Murderers are often imprudent,' was the Juge d'Instruction's placid rejoinder. 'How do you account for the presence of poison if you did not administer it?'

'How can I tell? Women take arsenic to improve their complexions,' ejaculated Barberon in exasperation: 'there is a surgery in my house, and my wife had access to it. She may have drugged herself unknown to me. But I don't believe arsenic has been found; it is far more likely that Legris and Lenoir have told lies to ruin me. I suppose it is they who conducted the analysis, and probably with poison in their pockets?'

M. Vrillard did not state that Doctors Legris and Lenoir had on the contrary deposed in Barberon's favour. This kind of *suppressio veri* is much practised by Juges d'Instruction, who find it useful to make a prisoner believe that he is cut off from all human sympathy.

'Doctors Legris and Lenoir are conscientious men,' remarked M. Vrillard evasively.

'Yes: they have as much conscience as Judas when he hanged himself,' responded Barberon contemptuously. 'But I'll confound them if it costs me my head: I'll expose their ignorance and make them slink out of court. . . . Arsenic, indeed! Shall I tell you what my wife died of? She was killed by an overdose of hydro-chloral.'

'Ah! you confess that you murdered her, then?' exclaimed the Juge d'Instruction, whipping out his note-book.

'No: it happened in this way,' answered Barberon, forgetful of all prudence. 'My wife could not sleep, and asked me to give her a composing draught. I forgot how weak she was, and gave her the same dose which she had sometimes taken when in good health.'

I suppose it proved too strong, for she never woke again. That is the whole truth: and before Heaven I swear it was an accident.'

'Yet you never made mention of it before now?'

'No, because I knew what construction would be put on the fact by my enemies. The disclosure must anyhow have blasted my prospects, for patients have no confidence in a doctor who gives an overdose by mistake.'

'Especially to his own wife: no, I should think not; and I cannot say you have bettered your case by this avowal,' replied the Juge d'Instruction drily. 'Gendarmes, you will convey this man to prison.'

Dr. Barberon had become calm from faintness and despair; but when the gendarme advanced towards him with the handcuffs he was suddenly seized with an impulse of resistance. He caught hold of a chair and shouted that he would not go to prison. The gendarmes had to close with him, and an ignoble scene ensued, while he was being thrown on the floor and manacled by force, foaming and roaring all the time like a wild beast. It was as much as the four men could do to master him, and his ravings filled the hospital, as he was borne out by the arms and legs, yelling: 'It's infamous—I am being murdered! Help! help!'

A few hours later the whole town of A—— knew that Dr. Barberon had been lodged in prison. The event formed the topic of discussion in all places of public resort, in the Casino, in the cafés, at the club; and everywhere the belief in the prisoner's guilt was unhesitatingly expressed. People also animadverted strongly on Madame Perreau's flight: some taxed her with heartlessness for having abandoned her betrothed in his trouble; others conjectured that she knew more of the murder than she cared to disclose, and was at least an accessory after the fact. This view was the most prevalent one, and, in sum, no one was surprised to hear that the Public Prosecutor had despatched detectives after the widow with a warrant to bring her back.

IV.

WHEN a murder is committed in France, popular excitement is intensified by the fact that the preliminary examination of the prisoner does not take place in public as in England. Curiosity has to feed on rumours. The newspapers collect what details they can and romance upon them. They are not liable to be punished for 'contempt of Court' if they blacken the prisoner's character and endeavour to create a prejudice against him. All that was written about Barberon by the Parisian and provincial press

tended to show that he was a demon of crafty wickedness; and this inflamed M. Vrillard with the ambition of gratifying society by getting him convicted.

Barberon was confined in a cell *au secret*. He was not allowed books or writing materials, and received no visits. Once a day he was led handcuffed to the Juge d'Instruction's room and there questioned for a more or less time. On some days the examination lasted but ten minutes; on others it was prolonged for hours. Varying his mode of attack according to circumstances, Vrillard was turn by turn amicably insinuating, solemn, or harshly menacing. The British notion of giving a prisoner fair play is ignored by Frenchmen, and M. Vrillard had purposely rendered Barberon's confinement most irksome that he might tempt him to confession by offers of indulgences. Barberon was a smoker, and begged for tobacco to soothe his nerves: he was promised cigars if he would answer certain questions tending to incriminate him; he wanted to write letters, and the same conditions were tendered: when he asked for books to relieve the tedium of his solitude he was told that it rested with him to shorten his *durance au secret*, by placing himself entirely at the mercy of his tormentor. The effect of all this upon a man of irascible temper was to engender paroxysms of fury: and rumours came abroad of uproarious scenes in which Barberon had to be held down in his chair by two gendarmes, to prevent him from flying at the Juge d'Instruction's throat.

Still, Barberon would not confess to wilful murder, and, as the evidence of arsenical poisoning was not strong enough to make a conviction certain, M. Vrillard was fain to sift the prisoner's antecedents with a view to collecting circumstantial testimony. Agreeably to this purpose he served subpoenas on all who had ever known the prisoner, or been heard to tattle about him. I, amongst others, was summoned to depose to the conversation Barberon had held with me at the club, when recounting the trials of his married life.

I repaired accordingly to the Palace of Justice one morning, and was conducted to the witnesses' waiting-room contiguous to the Magistrate's closet. This was about three weeks after Barberon's arrest. I had not been seated five minutes when a motley procession of country folks stumped in—first a lean old man with thick shoes and a blue cotton umbrella, then two florid hard-featured women of about thirty attired in the 'Sunday best' of farmers' wives, and lastly, two fat dejected young men with horny hands, evidently the husbands of the florid couple. These people saluted me with rustic courtesy; and then without more ado

plumped down on a form and continued in shrill tones a dispute which they had begun outside. I soon learned that they were the relatives of the late Madame Barberon—the old man being her father, and the two women her elder sisters—and their wrangle was about the dower that had been paid to the unfortunate lady on her marriage.

Like many small landowners who have amassed money slowly, M. Grassier—such was the old man's name—had given a better education to his youngest daughter than to his other children, and had been proud to see her marry a doctor. A hundred thousand francs had been set down in the marriage contract as Marie Grassier's dower, it being considered *infra dig.* for a medical man to accept a lesser portion; but to appease the jealousy of the elder sisters who had married farmers, it had been privately stipulated that only twenty-five thousand francs should be actually paid. To the horror of these elder sisters, however, it had transpired in the course of previous interviews with the Juge d'Instruction that their father had, by clandestine instalments, paid up the whole of the four thousand pounds to the husband of his pet daughter.

Since this disclosure old Grassier had known no peace. His daughters abused him eating, waking, walking; and they abused him now before me, upbraiding him for his unnatural conduct in giving more of his money to one child than to another—the heaviest domestic crime which a French father can commit. Old Grassier pished and pshawed and finally appealed to me. 'Well, sir, I never thought they'd murder the child,' said he, as he drew out a yellow check handkerchief and blew his nose dolefully.

'Tell him, sir, will you, that he's bound to get the money back every franc. He don't seem to understand it,' cried one of the young women whose name was Euphrasie.

'He was always crazed about this doctor,' chimed in her sister. 'We and our husbands was like dirt in his eyes once he had clapped eyes on this chap. But I told him from the first no good would come of the match.'

'Peace wi' yer, you was glad enough to get him to physic your children for nothing,' said old Grassier.

'That's a lie,' screamed the younger sister. 'He was paid with a calf's head when he cured my Jeannette of the measles.'

'Ask my husband if we didn't give the scamp a barrel of cider after my last lying-in,' added Euphrasie.

The pair of husbands sat mute at one end of the form, the one sucking the knob of a hickory stick, the other rubbing the calf of his leg. Old Grassier shrugged his shoulders and ceased to

contend against the brawling of his daughters, whose voices waxed louder every moment.

A gendarme poked his head in at the door and stopped the strife by summoning us all into the Juge's room. It was by a mistake that I was called in with the rest; but M. Vrillard, after first requesting me to withdraw, altered his mind and bade me stay. He said that he was going to confront us with Barberon, and hoped our joint evidence would break down this latter's assurance.

He touched a hand-bell, and after a few minutes which seemed to me long, the tramp of spurred boots resounded in the flagged passage, and the prisoner was introduced, manacled and supported under either arm by a gendarme. He had aged woefully: his features were cadaverous, and his eyes were distended to an enormous size. The two women set up a howl on seeing him, and old Grassier, stirred with a deeper emotion, rose, with his fists clenched, and muttered curses. Vrillard watched the effect of these demonstrations on the prisoner, who was only angered by them:—

‘When will you have done tormenting me?’ he asked with a scowl.

‘You see what grief you have brought on these unhappy people,’ said the Juge d’Instruction placidly. ‘If you had any good feeling you would ask pardon of an injured father.’

‘You ought at least to give back the dowry, you villain,’ sobbed Euphrasie.

‘You won’t want the money if they guillotine you,’ added her amiable sister.

‘Hush!’ said M. Vrillard. ‘Barberon, you are going to hear from your father-in-law’s lips the account of how you deceived and swindled him. Dry your tears, M. Grassier, and do not be afraid to speak.’

Old Grassier thus encouraged raised a sort of bleat, and began the most rambling, shuffling, long-winded story that ever left the mouth of an ill-educated man. The Juge d’Instruction, who sat with his back to the light eying Barberon; his clerk, who was scribbling short-hand notes at an adjoining table; the two gendarmes, who stood erect near the door, with their cocked hats on: and we, the five other witnesses, grouped near the fire-place, all listened intently to the old man’s yarn, and tried to make sense of it; but it was not easy. In sum, it appeared that Dr. Barberon had first become acquainted with Grassier by applying to him for a loan. Grassier was a sort of rustic usurer, who lent money on the sly at fifty per cent., taking crops or houses in pawn; and he did ^{render} Barberon’s security sufficient. When however the d

that instead of lending him 10,000 francs, the usurer should give him his daughter in marriage, and 25,000 francs along with her, the old man readily consented. There is a difference between trusting a man with money on a note of hand, and trusting him with your daughter, as every French father knows. Grassier confessed, however, that he had never thought much of Barberon, and his bad opinion of him was heightened when, after the marriage, the doctor made incessant demands for money. Madame Barberon used to come crying to her father and coax big sums out of him, saying that they were necessary to extend her husband's practice, and that they should all be repaid by-and-by. This went on for three years, but at last old Grassier grew tired of lending, and three months after his refusal to give another centime, Madame Barberon died.

'You hear that, Barberon?' said M. Vrillard. 'As soon as your wife was no longer in a position to satisfy your rapacity, you made away with her.'

'Not before he had got 75,000 francs, though!' screamed Naphrasie indignantly.

'Fathers who waste their children's substance ought to be put in prison,' echoed her sister. 'It's a crying shame that we should have been cheated in that way. What will there be left for us to inherit now when father dies?'

'Hush!' interposed M. Vrillard. 'Now attend to me, Barberon: you insured your wife's life nine months before her death for a hundred thousand francs. Why did you do that?'

'Because I saw she was in weak health.'

'The Insurance company's doctor did not perceive it. He reported on the contrary that your wife was a strongly constituted young woman.'

'I can't help it, if the man was a simpleton.'

'No, but the truth is that you had already planned your murderous speculation, and it's part of your system now to pretend that your wife was an invalid. Here, however, is an English gentleman who will depose to some statements made by you at the club, where you described your wife as a weak and silly person, who made you lead a wretched life. You forget that if your wife was really in a suffering condition, it would have been your duty as an affectionate husband to bear compassionately with her infirmities of temper, instead of reviling them.' Saying which M. Vrillard turned to me and begged that I would repeat all that I had heard.

I am now of what deadly import my deposition might be; and knowing as I did that Barberon had spoken under the influence of great excitement, I should have liked to attenuate his words.

But this was impossible. M. Vrillard had heard a report of our conversation from some eaves-dropper, and he put such adroit questions that I was compelled to unfold everything. I could not help admiring the little man's inquisitorial skill. When I had finished he took a pinch from a silver snuff-box and exclaimed in triumph :—'There ! what do you say to that, Barberon ?'

'I say nothing,' cried Barberon savagely. 'I am tired of your fiendish torturing, and will answer no more questions.'

'The chain of evidence against you is complete enough already, and when we have heard Madame Perreau, we shall doubtless get the completing links,' said M. Vrillard. 'That will do for to-day ; return to your cell and meditate.'

Thereupon the two women rose and clamoured again for their seventy-five thousand francs. They seemed to think the prisoner had got the money in his pockets. They were bidden to be quiet, and we were all dismissed together. I confess that at that moment I was more strongly convinced of Barberon's guilt than I had been before, and it was only as a matter of conscience that I resolved to suspend my judgment until Madame Perreau had been questioned. That lady might be able to throw some light on the circumstances that had preceded and followed Madame Barberon's death : she would be forced to say whether the Doctor had begun to woo her before or after becoming a widower.

Madame Perreau had escaped to Belgium, and the detectives who had been sent after her could not induce her to return. As there was no proof of her being accessory to the murder, it was not possible to demand her extradition, and the detectives could only urge that, if she declined obeying the Procureur's summons, she could never again set foot in France without being imprisoned. For this she cared little, she said ; but her obduracy was shaken by hints that some of her property on French soil might be seized under a writ of outlawry. At last Maitre Farcy charitably undertook to travel to Belgium and bring the widow back, having previously obtained a promise from the Public Prosecutor that she should not be molested in any way. Madame Perreau, her little girl, and Farcy, all returned together to A—— one night, and this event gave a new fillip to public excitement. Madame Perreau's nerves were in a shattered condition, and at her first confrontation with Barberon in M. Vrillard's presence she had a fit of hysterics. The Juge d'Instruction did not improve her condition by suggesting his belief that Barberon had intended marrying her solely that he might murder her and her little girl, and inherit their property. This idea had not occurred to the widow, but it forthwith seized upon her imagination, and haunted her like a nightmare. She

became Barberon's worst enemy, inveighed against him, recollected suspicious facts about him, and thereby found grace in M. Vrillard's eyes.

The indictment was now complete. The prisoner was committed for trial, and obtained leave to read, write, smoke, and confer with his legal advisers. He chose Farcy to defend him, and that able barrister went daily to the prison and had long interviews with the wretched man. This displeased the widow, but she dared not say so, for Farcy had acquired great ascendancy over her. He was now her only friend. The poor woman dared not stir outside her house because of the impertinent way in which people stared at her, and nobody came to visit her because her foolish flight had provoked inquiries as to her past life, and brought some disreputable facts to light. It appeared that Madame Perreau had been a rather light-heeled flower-girl before marrying her late husband, and she had been in prison for vagabondage; she had been fined for bickerings with the police, and she was born of parents who had spent the better part of their existences in gaol. There was nothing very heinous in all this, but it was hard upon the widow after years of blameless living to have youthful peccadilloes trumped up to her shame, and she would have felt more forlorn had it not been for Maître Farcy's kindness.

It is needless to say that Farcy affected, if he did not feel, the superbest conviction in Barberon's innocence, and in his ability to get him acquitted. He ended by partially convincing Madame Perreau, and he sought to convince everybody else; but not successfully.

'You see that's all nonsense: if one listened to those lawyers nobody would ever go to gaol or be guillotined,' grumbled old Colonel Tranchot, as we were playing whist one evening. 'Barberon's guilt is as clear as noonday.'

'I cannot say that I think so,' was my rejoinder: 'I think we ought to wait till the jury have pronounced.'

'I don't see that I need mould my opinion on that of a dozen grocers and bakers. You heard me say some weeks ago that I have never met with a prisoner who had not shady antecedents, and what do we find in this case? why, that the accused and his connections are mostly rogues of the same dye. Madame Perreau is a jade, old Grassier a usurer who sold his daughter, Barberon a swindler, liar, and brutal husband.'

'That is the mischief of routing out all a man's by-gones,' said I. 'I do not see how Barberon's alleged swindles bear upon the fact as to whether his wife was poisoned by arsenic. I am afraid that if the jury convict they will do so more because the man's

character has been so aspersed than because he is proved to have been a murderer.'

'Tut, tut! those are your English fads,' growled the Colonel. 'Go on now, it's your deal.'

V.

A—— was not an assize town: so Barberon was transferred to N—— a few days before that appointed for his trial. This was in November; the bathing-season at A—— had been over for some weeks, and I had returned to Paris. But I was summoned to attend the Court as a witness, and I arrived at N—— on the morning when the trial began.

I alighted at the hotel where Madame Perreau and her child were staying, for the trial was expected to last a week; and the widow had taken a suite of apartments. Maitre Farcy was also staying there, and he had converted the place into head-quarters of the witnesses for the defence. I perceived him standing in the vestibule of the hotel and gesticulating amidst a group of persons, some of whom had been summoned as witnesses to character, whilst others were toxicologists who were to rebut the evidence of the prosecution as to arsenic. It is to be noted that whenever a medical expert swears to a thing, any number of other experts can be found who will swear just the contrary. Doctors Legris and Lenoir were as staunch as ever to Barberon's cause—the former spoke, indeed, with a cautious vagueness not calculated to compromise him; but the latter, having been teased by the newspapers, was choleric and combative. He had discovered that the wallpaper and furniture in Madame Barberon's bed-room were green, and his theory was that the arsenic found in the body must have been derived from the inhalation of the poisonous ingredients in these green dyes. It was a bold theory, quite enough to establish the propounder's fame as a first-class savant if it succeeded in convincing the jury.

Curious to hear how Barberon was getting on, I waited for Farcy as he was setting out from the hotel, and we walked towards the Court together. He carried a big portfolio full of papers under his arm, and was excited by the prospect of the oratorical triumphs in store for him. It is not often that a provincial advocate has the chance of playing the leading part in a sensational murder trial, and Farcy was evidently proud that none of his eminent colleagues from Paris had been retained to lead the defence. 'I'll pull the fellow through if he leaves his case wholly in my hands,' said he. 'It's a sad pity that he ever spoke about that

chloral. Chloral leaves no traces, and he has only furnished the prosecution with a second string to their bow.'

'Perhaps he did right to speak the truth,' said I.

'But is it the truth?' cried Farey. 'Barberon is a doxomania: when you wound his vanity he knows not what he says or does. He spoke of the chloral merely to confound Legris and Lenoir, who, he thought, were against him. That is where my danger lies with the man. If he gets making speeches of his own, he will upset all my plans.'

'And how is Madame Perreau?' I inquired. 'If Barberon is acquitted, will she marry him?'

'Oh no; at least, I think not,' answered Farey, and I noticed that he turned suddenly red. Gossip had begun to accuse him of being a little more attentive to the rich widow than mere friendship warranted. 'Of course, you understand all this affair has agitated Madame Perreau. Women are women, you know. But good-bye for the present; here we are.'

We parted, for we had reached the Palace of Justice, and Farey went off towards the Barristers' robing chamber, whilst I sought the witnesses' entrance. The approaches to the building were thronged, and as the public part of the court had been filled within five minutes after the opening of the doors, the police were now refusing admittance to all save those who came on business. Carriages were setting down fashionably dressed ladies who held tickets for reserved seats; and there were journalists from Paris and local notabilities in great numbers who likewise had tickets. A policeman directed me where to go, and after threading a number of flagged passages where barristers in black gowns, gendarmes and clerks with blue bags were hurrying about, I was consigned to an usher with a sword. A few minutes later I found myself seated beside old Grassier and his daughters on the witnesses' bench of the Assize Court.

What a sight it was! A pale November sun streaming through the lofty windows threw a golden light on the painting of the Saviour on the Cross, which hung over the dais where the judges were to sit, and on the many-coloured bonnets of scores of ladies. A dozen gendarmes in yellow baldrics and big boots sat on a form below the empty dock, and the seats at the back of the Court were crowded with the public, tier upon tier. There was a loud hum of conversation as in a playhouse between acts, and the ladies were revelling opera-glasses towards the table where Maitre Farey was installed in his black gown and cambric fall, pretending to study his brief, but seemingly gratified at the curiosity he was exciting.

Ten o'clock struck; an usher announced 'The Court,' and the whole assembly rose while the judges marched in. There were five of them all in scarlet and ermine and gold, laced velvet bonnets; behind strode the Procurator General, also in scarlet. This official made for a private pulpit of his own, and gave a sign that the prisoner should be introduced. A door at the back of the dock opened, and Dr. Barberon suddenly appeared on the threshold with the two inevitable gendarmes guarding him. In a moment he stood full in the sunlight, and, carrying his head erect, looked strikingly handsome. He was dressed in black clothes and gloves; his hair was brushed off his forehead, and his pallor and subdued demeanour lent him a dignity I had never seen in him before. A long burst of whispering broke forth as he advanced to the rail, but silence was called; and soon a deep hush fell upon the Court while the Procurator's Clerk proceeded in a sing-song voice to read the indictment.

A person who has heard one of these documents has heard them all. They take a prisoner's career from boyhood, and accumulate all the facts that can tell to his disadvantage. This one recounted that Barberon had been expelled from a private school for insubordination; that he had frightened an old lady, his father's neighbour, by his ungovernable temper; that, being a student, he had borrowed fifty francs from a comrade and had forgotten to repay it; also that on various occasions during his scholastic life he had expressed atheistical opinions. There was a great deal more to the same effect, and the indictment took two hours to read. When it was ended the witnesses were ordered out of court during the prisoner's examination, and I retired with them.

Not knowing how soon I might be called, I was obliged to linger about the waiting-room, where old Grassier and his daughters began to hold forth about their woes. They had been struck with consternation at learning that even if Barberon was guillotined his property would not go to them, but to heirs of his own kith. They called this monstrous, and had constituted themselves *partie civile*, i.e., plaintiffs jointly claiming damages for Madame Barberon's death. They wanted 4000*l*.

Dr. Lenoir joined me and explained his theory of poisoning by inhalation. He was nervous as an actor about to tread the boards for the first time, and every time a door opened he started, cleared his throat and pulled down his wristbands, expecting to be called. Towards four, however, we were all released from attendance till the morrow, for the prisoner's examination was not likely to conclude that day. In the evening I saw Maitre Farey, who was worn

out with fatigue, and told me that Barberon's attitude had been 'deplorable.'

The newspaper reports published next morning confirmed this. Goaded to fury by the President's questions, insinuations, and sneers (for French judges always act as if they were retained by the prosecution), Barberon had repeatedly lost his temper. Farcy had been obliged to jump up twenty times to entreat him to be quiet, and he had begged the indulgence of Bench and jury for the wretched man's behaviour. 'Barberon is lost if he goes on in that way,' remarked the counsel dejectedly. 'He is sharpening the knife for his own neck. I tremble at the scene we shall have when the doctors are called.'

The medical evidence was, of course, to be the capital point of the trial. It was on the second day that the doctors were called, and the scene that ensued justified Farcy's worst forebodings. I was not an eye-witness of it, but I am enabled to relate the particulars of it from the newspaper reports, and from Maître Farcy's own account.

The expert in toxicology was the first to be sworn, and during his deposition Barberon remained quiet enough, biting his nails, and only shrugging his shoulders in contemptuous spasms; but when the Insurance Office Doctor, a pompous man, stood forth to affirm his belief in arsenical poisoning, the prisoner's patience snapped short. Bounding up from his seat in the dock, he cried, in a voice that rang through the court like a trumpet:—

'What do you know of poisons, sir? What dose of arsenic do you think sufficient to kill a woman?'

'It—it depends,' stammered the insurance doctor.

'Have you ever seen a person die of arsenic without vomiting or convulsions during sleep?'

'I—I—really——'

'I tell you it was of chloral she died, and you are nothing better than an idiot. You may take it, if you like, that I administered the chloral wilfully. I won't pretend that I didn't know the strength of the dose I mixed.'

Here Maître Farcy started up in dismay. 'I beg the gentlemen of the jury to pay no heed to my unhappy client's ravings,' he said. 'I will urge in my defence that he is not accountable for all his actions.'

'That's it—say that I'm a madman at once,' shouted Barberon indignantly. 'No, I am tired of all this. You are mistaken if you think that I will consent to be shut up all my life in a lunatic asylum to avoid losing my head on the scaffold. . . . Even if you acquit me, of what value will my life be to me now you have all

befouled it together? I prefer telling you the truth. I did poison my wife—with chloral, not with arsenic. We lived unhappily together. She was ill, and I put her painlessly out of her misery. If there be a heaven, she is there, and better off than she was with me; if there be none, she is asleep, and I wish no better fate for myself. . . .’

An indescribable sensation seized upon the audience as this sinister confession was made. Some of the ladies screamed from nervous emotion; an explosion of murmurs burst from the men. The President restored order and exhorted the jury, for form’s sake, not to be guided by the prisoner’s hysteric avowals, but only by the evidence. It was patent, however, that from this hour Barberon’s doom was sealed. The jury showed as much by the looks they interchanged. That day, and the next, and the next, a procession of witnesses filed through the Court to satisfy the exigencies of French procedure, which will suffer nothing to be done in a hurry; but the attention of the public grew listless, and Barberon himself seemed bored. Dr. Lenoir’s theory of poisoning by inhalation, which might under other circumstances have raised him to the pinnacle of fame, provoked only mirth: which shows on what small things professional renown may sometimes hinge. The poor man slunk from Court purple with confusion, and became a laughing-stock to all his medical brethren thenceforth.

Only once in the course of those three weary days did the devilish spirit in Barberon flash out again, and this was when Madame Perreau was examined. The widow stepped into the witness-box all attired in black, and studiously averted her gaze from the prisoner. This exasperated him. He had expected at least a look of sympathy from her—at least a word which might plead in his favour. But the evidence she gave in a faltering tone told rather against him, for she professed to have been grossly deceived by him. Nay, she added (which was untrue) that she had been terrified into promising to marry him by threats of his violence, but she had never really intended to marry a person whom she deemed half-crazy.

‘There, you hear what this lady says, Barberon,’ remarked the President. ‘She seems to have divined that you only wanted to marry her for the sake of getting her fortune.’

‘You don’t suppose I would have married such an old frump for her beauty, do you?’ retorted Barberon brutally. ‘The truth is, though, that it was she who set her cap at me.’

Poor Madame Perreau, who by no means looked a frump, gave a horrified yelp, and was carried out fainting, amid some titters from the female part of the audience. But this sally of Barberon’s

disgusted the men, and especially incensed his own counsel, who was observed to reproach him with vehemence. Barberon, however, seemed to glory in the repulsion which he excited. His vanity made him conscious that in braving the scaffold he was more interesting to the majority of spectators than if he had essayed to dispute his head to those who were doing their best to get it cut from his shoulders. He sat stroking his whiskers, and now and then cast a cold, self-satisfied glance at the batteries of opera-glasses fixed on him.

For my part, I was growing convinced that he was mad, and this appeared to be the opinion of Maître Farcy, who was pretty sanguine of being able to obtain 'extenuating circumstances' for him. French juries find 'extenuating circumstances' whenever there is anything to palliate, however slightly, the heinousness of a murder; and in such cases the judges are debarred from inflicting the death penalty. There was a pretty general opinion that Barberon would cheat the scaffold and be transported to New Caledonia.

It was on the fifth day of the trial that Maître Farcy rose to make his defence, and the court was crowded to suffocation. I came early, expecting to hear a good speech, but was disappointed. Farcy was not a great orator. He declaimed, gesticulated, worked himself into a perspiration, but could find none of those pleas which go straight to a hearer's heart. His harangue was concluded amidst an ominous silence, and after a brief reply from the Procurator General, and a pretty pithy summing up from the President, the jury retired to consider their verdict.

They returned into court at the end of twenty minutes with a verdict of 'Yes' on all the questions put to them, and were silent as to extenuating circumstances. This was tantamount to a sentence of death.

In French law-courts prisoners are not present when juries deliver their verdicts. They are brought in after the Judges have retired to draw up their judgment on paper: and the verdict is then read out to them by the Clerk of Arraignment. The gas was lighted in Court, and there were deep shadows in the corners of the large hall when Barberon re-entered the dock amidst an appalling silence. Everybody was standing, and the women especially strained forward to get a last look at him. Maître Farcy with a truly French impulse started up and offered his hand to the prisoner over the dock rail; but Barberon spurned it and stood with his arms folded, strangely calm.

The five Judges were standing with their bonnets on, and the President read out the sentence couched in formal language, and

concluding with the words: 'Peine de mort.' He added no words of his own to it, and Barberon simply bowed; then turned on his heel and walked out, followed by the noise of the audience, who exclaimed and chattered as they broke up to go.

Amidst these noises the shrill voices of old Grassier's two daughters could be heard, inveighing against the parsimony of the Jury, who had not awarded them a franc of damages.

'And they call this justice!—pretty justice, forsooth!' screamed these two country dames.

VI.

Was Barberon guilty?

Had he really killed his wife, or had he accused himself only from insane braggardism? For myself, I believe that in any case he was one of those moral madmen whose sense of right and wrong is confused. He believed in no religion, in no future state. He looked upon wealth and worldly advancement as the only things worth living for, and if he killed his wife, it was certainly under the deliberate conviction that he was doing no worse a thing than many others do when they want to get on in life. But I am not sure that he was a murderer. To this day the point is doubtful in my mind, and there are times when I doubt whether the unhappy man was not better than he seemed to be.

At Maître Farcy's request, Barberon signed an appeal; but the Court of Cassation rejected it. A petition for grace was then forwarded to the President of the Republic, and mine was one of the very few signatures appended to it. Some thought this petition would be entertained; but the case had made too much noise, and besides, Barberon's social position was such that he could not well have been pardoned without its being said that there was 'one law for the rich and another for the poor.' So the keeper of the seal wrote that justice must take its course; and the Procurator General issued a warrant, ordering the sentence to be executed in the market-place of A——, the town where the crime had been committed.

Feeling curious—perhaps rather morbidly so—to witness the catastrophe of the drama whose various terrible scenes I had followed, I repaired to A——, and through Maître Farcy's influence obtained permission to stand near the scaffold at the execution. The permission to see Barberon in his cell was denied me, but I learned from Farcy that the wretched man spent his days uttering horrible blasphemies as well as insults against Society. He was strait-waistcoated, as convicts under sentence of death always are,

but he smoked a good deal, and sometimes read books of science. He refused to see the chaplain. When that official entered his cell, he spoke words of scornful profanity which made the good man's hair stand on end.

I had to wait several days in A——, for the date of an execution is never known long beforehand. In fact, the order to the headsmen generally comes down on the afternoon before the ceremony. One night I had gone to bed not expecting that the *dénouement* was yet near, when I was awaked at five o'clock in the morning. A policeman whom I had paid to inform me when the execution should be impending, sent up word by the hotel night-porter that M. Roch (the executioner) had arrived at midnight with his assistants and paraphernalia, and that the scaffold was now being erected. The execution would take place at seven.

I dressed in a hurry, and taking with me the Procurator's order of admittance to a place near the scaffold, I set off for the market-place. It was a bitterly cold morning, but the moon was up, and its high beams gleamed lucidly upon a hideous spectacle—a scaffold draped with black, and surmounted by two upright posts, between which was suspended a long triangular knife, which flashed. Three rows of soldiers already surrounded the scaffold, and, despite the early hour, the market-place was crowded. My pass admitted me within the fence of soldiers, and an officer, who apparently took me for a public functionary, told me to ascend the platform. Here a grave, burly man in a dress coat was smoking a cigar, and superintending two assistants in shirt sleeves who were half-filling a couple of long baskets with sawdust. This was the executioner. He touched his hat to me, but made no remark. Presently he caught up a bunch of straw, passed it through a circular hole and pressed his forefinger on a spring: the triangular knife fell with a whirr and cut the straw clean in two. The executioner seemed satisfied. Before the knife was re-hoisted, however, by means of another spring, an assistant passed a piece of tallow candle over its edge.

The time did not seem long. The minutes flew; the market-place was filled to overflowing, and the first grey streaks of dawn appeared. There was no more than a dim twilight, and I thought there must be at least an hour to wait, when suddenly a deep roar arose from the crowd; and I observed six Gendarmes riding abreast and ploughing their way through the human turf. Behind came a cab, and behind that rode another squad of gendarmes. The cavalcade arrived at the foot of the scaffold, the cab door was opened, and Barberon descended, supported by two warders. There was a coat thrown loosely over his shoulders; but it fell off as he

was being assisted up the steps, and he stood with no other upper garment but his shirt, of which the collar was thrown back so that his bare neck could be seen.

Behind Barberon came the prison chaplain tugging imploringly at the convict's arm, and trying to hold a crucifix before his lips. Barberon shook him off—once—twice—but the third time, as the moonlight shone upon the emblem of our Redemption, some contrition seemed to seize the doomed man. His hands were tied behind his back, and he could make no gesture; but he advanced his lips frantically towards the crucifix and kissed it.

I heard the priest exclaim, . . . 'Thank you, my son!'

Then, more rapidly than words can describe, Barberon was seized by both arms and forced forward on to a plank which tilted and laid him horizontally with his neck in a semicircular aperture. Another semicircle closed upon him imprisoning his head, and at the same moment the knife fell. All this took place within a minute. Before I could fairly realise what I was seeing, the wretched man's head lay in one basket and his quivering body in another. The body kicked as if it was alive. In another minute both baskets had been shoved into a closed hearse which trotted off to the cemetery, preceded by a mounted escort, and followed by the cab bearing the chaplain—who was blessing heaven—poor man!—that the sinner had not died impenitent.

Twelve months after this tragedy Maître Farcy married Madame Perreau, and the two went to live in Switzerland.

Early Forms of Cricket.

THOUGH the earliest mention of our national English game by its modern name of 'cricket' occurs no further back than the reign of Elizabeth, it is quite clear that Britons batted and bowled away merrily, long before the days of the Virgin Queen, though they called their pastime by other names.

The name, of course, is of minor importance if the principle of the games can be proved to be the same, as nothing is more common than to find a pastime with many different names, according to the place where it is played. Thus 'rounders' is still the same good old English game, though Edinburgh street boys call it 'dully,' and our American cousins have elevated it into their national game under the name of 'base-ball.' So with our game: and the only question is whether the identity of cricket with 'club-ball,' 'stool-ball,' and the other names we shall notice below, can be proved as clearly as that of, say, rounders with base-ball, or hockey with shinty and hurling. This question may easily be answered in the affirmative.

Before entering, then, on the history of our great game under its present name, let us glance at some of these old pastimes, and see if we can find in them the rude beginnings from which the scientific game of to-day has been built up.

According to Strutt, club-ball was the earliest name for the game. It was popular enough in the reign of Edward III. to be included under its Latin name of 'Pila bacculorea' in his proclamation against football, handball, and other pastimes specified, which unduly occupied the attention of the people, to the great detriment of their military exercises, and especially of archery. Strutt, however, has not noticed a paragraph in the 'Gentleman's Magazine' for 1788, where Sylvanus Urban draws attention to perhaps the earliest allusion to the game under a name curiously like 'cricket.' 'In the wardrobe account of the 28th year of King Edward I., A.D. 1300 (page 126), published in 1787 by the Society of Antiquaries, among the entries of money paid to one Mr. John Leek, his chaplain, for the use of that King's son, Prince Edward, in playing at different games, is the following:—"Domino Johanni de Leek, capellano Domini Edwardi fil' ad CREAG' et alios ludos per viccs, per manus proprias 100 Sh." ' Glossaries, the writer says, have been searched in vain for any other pastime, except cricket, to which the name 'creag' can apply; and it is allowable for us to

say that, even in these early times, our game was played by some of the highest personages in the kingdom, and that, too, under a name from which its modern appellation is most probably derived.

No written description of the mode of play in club-ball or creag exists, but we can get a clear enough idea of it from engravings in two old manuscripts. The earliest of these representations of the pastime is in a genealogical roll of the Kings of England down to Henry III.—‘*Chronique d’Angleterre depuis Ethelberd jusqu’à Henri III.*’—in the Royal Library. It is a delineation of two male figures playing a game with a bat and ball. The batsman holds the ball in one hand, while in the other he has his bat held perpendicularly, as if about to strike the ball: the other player is drawn with both arms extended, as if eagerly anxious and watchful for a catch. The bat is straight and broadest at the point, from which it gradually tapers to the handle. It is quite probable that the holding of the ball by the batsman was only a conventional way of showing its existence, adopted by the artist if he found it desirable to omit, or difficult to introduce, the bowler (who, as we shall see, appears in the other MS.); indeed, in another drawing in this same chronicle the artist has only delineated a batsman and a female fielder, and has left out the ball as well as the bowler.

A much more complete representation of a club-ball match in the latter days of the Plantagenets is given in a drawing in the ‘*Romance of the good King Alexander*,’ a manuscript in the Bodleian Library, dated 1344. Here we have a batsman, a bowler, and four fielders, who are all monks, which proves that the game was one held in favour by Mother Church as well as by the Court.

Strutt, indeed, has taken the bowler and some of the fielders to be women, but it is more likely that they are monks with their cowls up. However this may be, in the drawing we have a capital delineation of a single-wicket game, the bowler poising the ball with outstretched arm, as if in the act of bowling it to the batsman, who holds his long and slightly curved bat raised vertically in the air, ready for a hit; while behind the bowler are the fielders, with their hands raised, waiting to catch or stop the ball when hit by the batsman, and all looking very eager for a ‘chance.’ This seems quite satisfactory proof that the principle of this old game was, at least, closely akin to that of cricket; and though no stumps appear in either of these drawings, this is rather an additional proof of the practical identity of the games than otherwise, for it is quite clearly proved that wickets are a very recent addition to cricket, and that, as we shall see, in the infancy of the game the batsman stood before a circular hole in the turf, and was

put out, as in 'rounders,' by being caught, or by the ball being put into this hole. A century and a half ago this hole was still in use, though it had on each side a stump only one foot high, with a long cross-bar of two feet in length laid on the top of them—what Mr. Frederick Gale calls 'a skeleton hurdle of about two feet wide and one foot high.'

An old game, called 'handyn and handoute,' is supposed to have been another form of what was destined to develop into the scientific cricket of modern times, but the only authority for this conjecture appears to be contained in this extract from Daines Barrington's 'Remarks on the more Ancient Statutes,' when commenting on King Edward IV.'s law against unlawful games in 1477:—'The disciplined soldiers were not only guilty of pilfering on their return, but also of the vice of gaming. The third chapter therefore forbids playing at cloish, ragle, half-bowle, queke-borde, handyn and handoute. Whosoever shall permit these games to be played in their house or yard is punishable with three years' imprisonment: those who play at any of the said games are to be fined 10*l.*, or lie in jail two years. This is the most severe law ever made in any country against gaming; and some of those forbidden seem to have been manly exercises, particularly the "handyn and handoute," which I should suppose to be a kind of cricket, as the term "hands" is still (1766) retained in that game.' This is meagre evidence enough to connect this prohibited pastime with cricket, but nothing more seems to be known about it.

Strutt makes no attempt to describe this game, but merely notes that it was spoken of as a new game, and forbidden by King Edward's severe statute.

Even though we have to give up the case of handyn and handoute for lack of evidence, we find ample amends when we turn to the next of our progenitors of cricket, the merry old game of stool-ball, in which lads and lasses used to join on their village greens in the 'good olden time,' and which still exists in some of the southern counties as a special game for women.

Its season seems to have been very much that of cricket newadays, though perhaps it was more especially a game for spring and early summer: thus, in Poor Robin's Almanac for 1677, in the observations on April, we find against Easter Monday and Tuesday a note that

Young men and maids,
Now very brisk,
At barley-break and
Stool-ball frisk;

while in the same almanac for 1740 we are told that when the merry month of May has come,

Much time is wasted now away
At pigeon-holes and nine-pin play;
Whilst hob-nail Dick and simp'ring Frances
Trip it away in country dances;
At stool-ball and at barley-break,
Wherewith they harmless pastime make.

It was a common thing for the lads and lasses to play at stool-ball during the Easter holidays for tansy cakes, a prize which Selden in his 'Table Talk' conceives to have originated from the Jewish custom of eating bitter herbs at the time of the Passover. Among the many writers of the last two centuries who allude to stool-ball, several notice this custom, as Herrick does in these lines from his 'Hesperides'—

At stool-ball, Lucia, let us play
For sugar-cakes and wine;
Or for a tansie let us pay,
The losse be thine or mine.
If thou, my deere, a winner be
At trundling of the ball,
The wager thou shalt have, and me,
And my misfortunes all.

This custom, however, does not appear to have been confined to Easter-tide, or, at any rate, this pleasant little fillip to flagging interest was soon extended to summer games, for in Tom D'Urfey's play of 'Don Quixote,' acted at Dorset Gardens in 1694, occur these lines:—

Down in a vale, on a summer's day,
All the lads and lasses met to be merry;
A match for kisses at stool-ball to play,
And for cakes and ale, and cider and perry.

Chorus. Come all, great, small, short, tall, away to stool-ball.

Though the frequent allusions to stool-ball in the literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries testify to its great popularity among the lower orders, we might have been at a loss to know how it was played if it were not that it still is played in Sussex, and that local tradition seems to have preserved the old rules of the game. Dr. Johnson, indeed, tells us in his dictionary that it was a game where balls were driven from stool to stool, but he contents himself with this meagre definition, and does not go any deeper into the mysteries of stool-ball. Strutt never saw the game played, though he tells us that he was informed 'that a pastime called stool-ball is practised to this day in the northern parts

of England, which consists in simply setting a stool upon the ground, and one of the players takes his place before it, while his antagonist, standing at a distance, tosses a ball with the intention of striking the stool; and this it is the business of the former to prevent by beating it away with the hand, reckoning one to the game for every stroke of the ball; if, on the contrary, it should be missed by the hand and touch the stool, the players change places.' Strutt's stool-ball, however, is rather 'rounders' than cricket, for he goes on to say that sometimes a certain number of stools are set up in a circular form, and at a distance from each other, and that at each stroke of the ball the players stationed at the stools must run in succession from stool to stool, being put out if hit by the ball or caught out.

The real stool-ball, however, was, and is, a double-wicket game, in which the players used a kind of bat, and defended wickets, which, perhaps, originally were stools, but afterwards became two boards about a foot square fixed on short poles from three to four feet high, according to the age of the players, and about thirteen yards from each other. Balls were bowled, runs scored, and catches made, just as in cricket. The players usually numbered from eight to eleven on each side, and the fields were placed as nearly as possible as they are in cricket. From the height of the wicket-boards, balls had necessarily to be bowled full pitch, and the striker was out if the board was hit or the ball caught.

This cheerful and exciting game appears to have been played chiefly in Sussex, and there only by the female sex. In the Sussex villages some years ago it was to girls what cricket is to boys. 'Women's cricket,' says a writer in 'Notes and Queries,' 'was played in almost every village of the county.' It was a favourite game at fairs; at school feasts the clergymen's families and the gentry joined the girls in the game. Matches, too, were played by the ladies of one parish against those of another. The advent of croquet, however, seems to have lessened the interest taken in it, but it is now being revived in Sussex, the initiative being taken by a ladies' club, composed of members of the principal county families near Horsham. As it is a lively and exciting game it is almost certain to be taken up in other places, and is likely to run lawn-tennis hard for the pride of place once occupied by the deposed croquet.

In the 'Graphic' for October 12, 1878, there is a spirited illustration of a match at stool-ball, played at Horsham Park last autumn, between two county clubs of young ladies—the Foresters and the Horsham Park Eleven. From the accompanying description we learn that the Foresters made 109 runs in their first inn-

ings and 136 in their second, while their fielding and bowling were so exceedingly good that their opponents were put out for 60 runs in their first and 16 in their second innings. The bats used were small wooden instruments like a battledore or racket, only with rather shorter handles, while the ball was a full-sized tennis ball. Balls had to be bowled underhand and full pitch.

A large gathering of the neighbouring gentry assembled to witness the match, which excited the greatest interest. 'The two elevens were dressed in picturesque uniforms of light blue and pink, and the beautiful grounds adjoining the house were gaily decorated with flags. The whole formed a most striking scene.' With such allurements the great chances are that not a few recreant cricketers may find the parent more enjoyable than the child, may desert cricket, and, like Richard in Shadwell's 'Woman Captain,' resolve that for the future they 'will play at stool-ball with the maids.'

Many correspondents of 'Notes and Queries' some time ago held that the obsolete game of stob-ball was another variety of the principle of cricket. Very little is known about this old game, but from the meagre glimpses we do get of it in old authors it seems to have been akin rather to golf than to cricket. There are two allusions to it in the Berkeley MSS. (1618), one in which the writer only records that the 'Earl of Leicester, with an extraordinary number of attendants, and multitudes of country people that resorted to him, came to Wotton, and thence to Michaelwood Lodge, casting downe part of the pales which, like a little parke, then enclosed that lodge, and thence went to Wotton Hill, where hee played a match at stoball.' While in the other, the writer most tantalisingly refrains from describing the game on the plea that it is so well known. 'The large and levell playnes of Slimbridge, Warth, and others in the vale of this hundred,' he writes, 'and downes or hilly playnes of Stuichcombe, Westridge, and others in the hilly part doe witnes the inbred delight that both gentry, yeomanry, rascallity, boyes and children doe take in a game called stoball, the play whereat each child of twelve yeares old can (I suppose) as well describe as myselfe: and not a sonne of mine but at seven was furnished with his double stoball staves and a gamester thereat.' Aubrey, however, in his 'Natural History of Wiltshire,' gives us a sufficiently minute account of the pastime to show that cricket owes no part of its play to stob-ball. 'This game is peculiar to North Wilts, North Gloucestershire, and a little part of Somerset, near Bath,' says he. 'They strike a ball stuffed very hard with quills and covered with soale leather as big as a bullet (elsewhere he says this ball is of about four inches in

diameter), with a staffe commonly made of withy, about $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet long. Colemdoune is the place so famous and so frequented for stob-ball playing. The turfe is very fine and the rock freestone is within $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch of the surface, which gives the ball so quick a rebound. I doe not heare that this game is used anywhere in England, but in this part of Wiltshire and Gloucestershire adjoining.' There appears to be no vestige of this old game left in those counties now.

In a curious book published in 1722, the 'Life of the Scottish Rogue,' the vagabond hero tells us he was fond of 'cat and dog,' an old form of cricket once very popular in certain parts of Scotland. 'I was but a sorry proficient in learning,' he writes, 'being readier at cat and dog, wrestling, and foot-ball, and such other sports as we use in our country, than at my book.' Dr. Jamieson says that this game was chiefly played in Angus and Lothian, and that at the very least three players are required, who are furnished with clubs. They cut out two holes, each about a foot in diameter and 7 inches in depth, and 26 feet apart. One man guards each hole with his club. These clubs are called dogs. A piece of wood about 4 inches long and 1 inch in diameter, called a cat, is pitched by a third person from one hole towards the player at the other, who has to prevent the cat from getting into the hole. If it pitches into the hole, the bowler who threw it takes his turn with the club. If the cat be struck, the club-bearers change places, and each change of place counts one to the score of the two who hold the clubs, who are viewed as partners.

This is manifestly a rude foreshadowing of the cricket of to-day, and if we substitute a ball for the more easily obtained piece of wood, 'cat and dog' would be most probably identical with the game played by the cricketers of the end of the seventeenth century.

From all this, then, we have sufficient proof that, though cricket is hardly mentioned by its modern name before the Revolution, yet that it existed long before then under other names.

ROBERT R. MACGREGOR.

The Honest Farmer.

BY JAMES PAYN.

I HAVE heard it said by a Londoner that though the country may be Arcadia, the people that live in it are pretty much like the Burlington Arcadians after all. This cynical gentleman could never have known Robert Foracre, who occupied the Manor Farm, in Sefton, the village in Wiltshire in which my youth was passed, and in whose quiet churchyard I hope to lay my bones. He was the very model of the honest English farmer, as represented upon the stage, which is, as everybody knows, but the reflection of human life. He had a round red face twinkling with good humour and moderate prosperity; his eyes were small, but bright and genial; his face reflected the simplicity and rectitude of his mind, the richness of his crops, and the warmth of the sun that ripened them, and when (as he often did) he mopped it with his pocket-handkerchief, it shone again like polished mahogany. For the most part, agriculturists are much given to grumble. Old Jacob Arable, who occupied the next largest farm to Mr. Foracre's in our parish, was, for example, always complaining. In the very best season the country had had for years, our rector ventured to congratulate him upon it: 'Come, Mr. Arable, you must allow that everything has worked together for good up to this date?'

'Well, I don't know so much about that, sir; there will be no damaged hay for the young calves.'

That is the way with what George Eliot calls 'bovine' men: they are never satisfied with the arrangements of Providence; and, what is worse, they are always wanting things civilised persons do not want—such as rain. I scarcely remember a summer—that is, before this one—when the country has not been represented as in a desperate state for lack of something or another more or less disagreeable. For my part, I use what influence I can to get fine weather always. I have noticed that the country gets over its troubles somehow; and then it lasts for ever, which I, unhappily (except in my immortal works), shall not.

Well, Robert Foracre was a glorious exception to these wet blankets. When I used to say, 'I hope we shall have fine weather for the cricket match,' he always answered, 'I hope you will, Master James,' though all the time his fields were parching; and when I said, 'I hope it will be wet to-morrow, because then I

shan't go to school,' he said, 'I hope so too, Master James,' though all his hay was lying out. When the squire asked him how his crops were getting on, he always answered, 'Nicely, sir:' in a word, he liked to make things comfortable all round, and if they were not so, he didn't make a fuss about it. Robert always reminded me, when a little child, of those chubby suns in the picture-books which smile from the sky at the attempts of Boreas and other puffed-out ministers of storm and wind to produce unpleasantness. As I grew older, he became a rustic divinity who dispensed syllabub in an orchard. And when I got to be a man, and lost my illusions, this good farmer still remained to me as one of the noblest works of Providence within my limited horizon.

From what I have said as to his unruffled temper and sanguine views, it will be gathered that Mr. Robert Foracre was a bachelor. He had come as a stranger into our district when he was a young fellow of four-and-twenty, and had remained in it for forty years, in what I may call a state of siege from maidens and widows, but had held out gallantly, and was at length pronounced impregnable. He was rallied, of course, about this and that rustic beauty, but he only replied with a good-humoured laugh, or by the modest confession that 'he was not good enough for her.' I used to think this answer of the honest farmer worthy of Machiavelli, of whom in all probability he had never so much as heard. The objection in question has, of course, been made before, but always with the intention of winning the lady: to use it as a means of escape was a stroke of genius, and I am not sure but that it would stand a man in good stead even in a case of breach of promise of marriage. 'I would have married her, my lord judge, Heaven knows, but I felt I was not worthy of her.' There is a serious obligation about it reminding one of the Decalogue, and also a pathetic touch suggesting an inscription on a tombstone. There were features about the man that recalled to me the characteristics of Tennyson's 'Miller:' he had a 'wise smile,' which would doubtless have been 'dry,' had circumstances admitted of it, and which seemed 'half within and half without, and full of dealings with the world.' For with all his quiet geniality, Mr. Foracre knew how to take care of himself. In Wiltshire we are not fond of strangers; we are a simple race—some people even call us 'moon-rakers'¹—and apt to imagine that outsiders wish to take advantage of us; and in the first instance the honest young farmer was by no means received with open arms. His modest ambition was to take a small farm in the district, the whole of which belonged to the Duke of

¹ A rustic in Wiltshire was once seen endeavouring to rake the moon out of a pond, which has ever since caused reflections to be cast upon us.

Grampian, and he applied to Lawyer Smart, the Duke's steward and managing man, with this object.

Now, Mr. Smart was not a person to let land go out of his hands to any man without good warrant not only of his solvency, but of his ability; and it was always rather a matter of wonder with us how this applicant obtained his first footing. For, to tell the honest truth, Foracre was not a good farmer in an agricultural sense, though morally, as I have shown, as good as gold. He was not sound upon the theory of the rotation of crops; he used little guano, and seldom employed machinery; and though he was far from an idle man, he took life rather easily. He did not rise with the lark, or brush 'with hasty steps the dews away, to meet the sun upon the upland lawn.' If he ever made an appointment of that kind, he never kept it; but, at the same time, he always spoke with respect both of high farming and early rising. Indeed, he spoke with respect of everything except of poachers and Dissenters, who happened to be the two classes that Mr. Smart held in highest reprobation; and it was whispered that it was the young fellow's artless sympathy that won the land steward over to let him have the little farm. He paid his rent very punctually for several years, and by no means mismanaged the place, but he could scarcely be said to have improved it; and it was understood that the Duke would have none but improving men upon his land. Therefore the surprise of the neighbourhood was considerable when another farm, much larger and more valuable, was intrusted to him. It was well known that there was a limit to the distance that mere agreement with his opinions could carry Mr. Smart; and, moreover, on the occasion when he and Mr. Foracre, now a middle-aged man, but of course much his junior, met in one another's society, there was not any undue deference observable on the latter's part. Indeed, judging from what I myself saw of them, the deference was rather on the other side, which was certainly remarkable. For next to the Duke of Grampian, his land steward, though he was but a country attorney, was, as his Grace's representative, perhaps the most powerful man in the county, and was looked up to, by those whom he could favour; accordingly.

I remember the man well, for he was my uncle the rector's lawyer, and more than once have I ridden over on my pony to Barton, our post-town, where he lived, with documents for him from my relative. He had a good house looking on the street, with a large garden in its rear, and quite independent of the 'office' establishment, with which, however, it communicated; and I recollect, boy as I was, how it surprised me once to see

Farmer Foracre come out of the former part of the edifice one day like a guest and an equal.

My uncle raised his eyebrows when I told him of it, as though he could not make it out either: for Mr. Smart had no daughter to marry (even supposing her union with a farmer would not have been a *mésalliance*), but only one little boy, who it was said would one day be immensely rich. However rich he was growing, that did not prevent Mr. Smart from money-getting, at which he was a very sharp hand: and I think my uncle had his suspicions that honest Foracre would have to pay pretty handsomely for the consideration with which I had seen him treated. Tenants of the Duke had more than once been sold up rather suddenly, and the principal creditor, who had supplied them with money (for a due consideration) during their embarrassments, had proved to be Mr. Smart himself. Everyone would have been sorry had this fate happened to honest Foracre, and indignant also; for it was plain that his wits, though serviceable enough in their way, were not to be matched against the attorney's. Nobody could doubt it who saw the latter's hard grey eyes and keen hatchet face—which seldom broke into a smile except in the presence of his Grace the Duke—and contrasted them with the physiognomy of the good farmer.

However, so far from being sold up, Foracre became very prosperous, and, as it happened, was 'gazetted,' if I may so call it, to a larger farm than the one he then held, on the very next market-day to that on which I had seen him leave Mr. Smart's house, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand—which is the way with Wiltshire folks after a good meal. Thus far I have written from my personal knowledge of the man, but I heard much of him from others. Although none knew whence he had sprung, he seemed to have a good many friends, who came to visit him from time to time, and who were all apparently respectable persons. It was noticed, too, by those who spoke with them, that they were much above the common run in the way of intelligence, and superior to their host in that way, if not in social position. This, again, was set down in the good man's favour, for bachelor farmers, even of middle age, are sometimes coarsely convivial, and will surround themselves, when they can afford it, with boon companions who do them no good. As Mr. Foracre advanced in years these guests grew more numerous, which might be easily accounted for by his increased means of entertainment. At the time I have in my mind he was in the occupation of the Manor Farm, and, so to speak, at the top of the tenant tree; but what was observed as curious was, first, that his friends only came one at a time; and

secondly, that no friend ever visited Mr. Foracre's twice. They came, and apparently enjoyed themselves: they shot and fished (for Mr. Smart gave Foracre greater sporting rights than were enjoyed by most tenants), and ate and drank of the best, and parted, as it seemed, with their entertainer upon the best of terms; but they never turned up again in Sefton. Another peculiarity of the honest farmer's visitors was that they were always giving him presents. The Manor Farm, large as it was, was almost entirely furnished by the contributions of its tenant's friends and admirers: they did not send mere knick-knacks such as form wedding presents, but serviceable articles of value—carpets, dinner tables, and bookcases, of all of which Mr. Foracre made no more than a fashionable curate does of his gift slippers. He never flaunted his popularity in the face of his less fortunate fellow-creatures: 'Smith and Jones,' he would say, 'are very kind, much too kind,' and that was all. One day he had a very handsome silver breakfast service sent him, such as probably was not to be seen in Sefton, except in the squire's house. He was very unwell at the time, and this act of generous attention might have caused many a man—softened by illness—to make much of such a gift; yet no one so much as heard him speak of it. Nevertheless, he could not disarm envy; and I well remember Miss Tabitha Prim, a bitter old maid of Calvinistic opinions, the sister of the village doctor, taking on herself to remind him of what was written about laying up gold and silver against the day of wrath. But the excellent fellow only smiled, and thanking her for her good intentions, at the same time pointed out to her that they were without application in his case, since the metal in question was only electro-plate. Foracre had a good deal of quiet humour—a gift which, when joined to imperturbable good temper, is not resented by even the dullest people; and though he never offended others, he was very forgiving when the offence was committed against himself. For example, he was cheated very shamefully by his housekeeper. He used to go away for a short holiday every year, choosing some slack time in agricultural operations, which he passed, it was understood, at the house of one or other of his numerous friends. During his absence this woman used to send vast hampers full of dairy and garden produce to a sister in London, who was in the greengrocery line. One of these was intercepted, and the fraud discovered; but nevertheless her master forgave her. I shall never forget his describing how neatly all the stolen articles were packed, as if that had really been a point in the woman's favour. She had also written a note with them, which he carried about with him, and read with a good deal of quiet appreciation. 'The B at the

bottom' [she meant the butter] 'was churned latest,' was one sentence; and at the end she had written: 'I hope this finds you as well as it leaves me, thank God.' This housewifely care and particularity, and also the piety that mingled with it, seemed to Mr. Foracre so admirably humorous that, so far from prosecuting the thief, he retained her in his service, though not without exciting some scandal. Miss Tabitha always said that if the woman had been less good-looking (though for her part she could see little enough to admire in her), she would have been dismissed from the Manor Farm. It was not likely, however, that the flicker of Miss Tabitha's forked tongue could affect honest Robert Foracre in the opinion of those who knew him. As a matter of fact, vices he had none, and even his weaknesses were not prejudicial to other people. If he took a glass too much at market, it never made him quarrelsome: he would come home singing in the gig, instead of silent—that was all. And in his latter years this was rather frequent. Many a time have I heard him thunder by the rectory door at night (for on such occasions he would drive very fast), carolling forth his favourite ditty of the 'Hornet,' or Harnet, as he termed it in his country pronunciation:

'A harnet sat in a hollow tree,
A proper spiteful twoad was he,
And a-merrily sang as 'ee did set
His sting as sharp as a baggonet,' etc.

These little things in Wiltshire are very properly considered as mere foibles. What his neighbours would have ridiculed him more for, had they known it (but it was only known to Dr. Prim, Mr. Smart, and his intimate friends), was that he was a hypochondriac, which, to look at him or to listen to his cheery talk, you would never have imagined.

He had often short but severe attacks of illness, and on these occasions always imagined himself at the point of death. But his end did not happen, poor fellow, at all as he expected. He was thrown out of his gig coming home from Barton market, and from being a little elevated by liquor, perhaps, got a fall that broke his neck. No occurrence, without any exception, was ever mourned so much in our village; for we all felt that an honest man was gone, and one who had never had a cross word for anybody. All the principal persons of the parish attended the funeral, and my uncle and myself (at Mr. Smart's invitation) went afterward to the Manor Farm to hear his will read. There were a good many other folks there—the friends that had been staying with the poor man from time to time, and who, having doubtless read of the accident in the newspapers, had come to pay him their last tribute

of respect; but not one of them seemed to know any of the others. Under the circumstances, Mr. Smart thought it necessary to say a few preliminary words: 'You will, perhaps, wonder, gentlemen,' said he, in his dry way, 'why I have taken upon myself all the arrangements for Mr. Foracre's interment, and am here in this prominent position, when there may be some here who have known him longer and more intimately. But the fact is, I was not only his legal adviser, but am bound to him by ties of obligation, which I hope myself and Ebenezer here'—he pointed to his son, a serious young gentleman of nineteen years of age, whom he had brought with him—'will not easily forget. When Foracre came into this district he was unknown to any one within it, and it was my good fortune to have the opportunity of letting him a small farm. He remained in it for some years, winning the approbation of all about him, apparently in the enjoyment of good health; but presently he had one of those sudden and severe attacks of illness to which, as most of you know, he was unhappily subject, and caused me to be sent for—professionally. Gentlemen, I do assure you I had no more notion than yourselves, when I was thus summoned, that that visit of mine would have been fraught with any consequences to me or mine; judge, therefore, my astonishment when our deceased friend—who, indeed, looked like a dying man, and who I little thought had the useful career before him with which we are all acquainted—was so good as to thus address me: "Mr. Smart," said he, "you have behaved very kindly to me since I have come into your neighbourhood. I have not been so good a farmer as I might have been, but you have borne with me very patiently." Gentlemen, these words went home to my heart; for, as a matter of fact, I had written to him rather intemperately, and even warned him that he would have notice to quit this farm. "I propose to make to you," said Mr. Foracre, in a faint voice, "some little return for your considerate conduct. I am not a rich man, but I have a few thousand pounds not invested in my land; and though the sum will be doubtless insignificant in your eyes, I hope it will have a value from the means—so honourable to yourself—by which you will become possessed of it. Having no relatives of my own, I mean to leave the whole of my property, not to you, my dear friend—no, not to you, because in that case you would feel a delicacy in drawing up my will—but to your sweet little boy Ebenezer. Of course I would have preferred you to enjoy it yourself; but since this illness, though I feel it to be mortal, may not result in death, I leave it to your son, instead of you, since he at least, it is certain, will outlive me." Here is the will, and here is the heir.'

continued Mr. Smart, laying his hand with solemnity upon Ebenezer's head. 'I hope, my boy, that you may grow up as good a man as honest Robert Foracre.'

Here was a revelation for some of us. We now understood how it was that poor Foracre, although not a good farmer, had gone on 'from high to higher' in the tenancy of his Grace's farms, thanks to his good intentions toward Master Ebenezer Smart. The strangers, of course, knew nothing of this, but they too, it seemed by their faces, experienced considerable surprise. One of them, a red-haired, keen-faced fellow, who vastly reminded me of a ferret, rose from his chair and asked to look at the date of the will.

'It was made eighteen years ago, sir,' observed Mr. Smart. 'The witnesses are both alive, however, and, as it happens, resident at Barton at the present time.'

'There is no objection to their residing there eighteen years longer,' remarked the ferrety individual, with great coolness; 'but I have a will here, made by the late Mr. Foracre, and dated nine years later, bequeathing his whole property to my own son John Adolphus Cannie. I too, I am glad to say, have had the opportunity of being of some service to the lamented deceased, and in consideration of it he executed this deed, which you will find perfectly attested——'

'As to *your* will, Mr. Cannie,' interrupted a second stranger, with a lofty and legal air, 'I am sorry to say, for *your* sake, that it is mere waste paper. Only two years ago I had the good fortune to make our deceased friend's acquaintance, under circumstances that I think I may say it is a comfort to me, on an occasion like the present, to look back upon, and he was so good as to mark his sense of my course of conduct by leaving to my only daughter, Sarah Lawson, as will be seen in this document——'

'My good sirs,' broke in another grave and powerful voice, 'unless you have any instrument executed by the late Robert Foracre of a later date than July 19 (which I think is hardly probable), you need not trouble yourselves to contest the matter.'

'And who the deuce are you, sir?' inquired Mr. Lawson.

'Sir, I am, as you may read for yourself, Mr. Foracre's residuary legatee.'

At this great and terrible word a ghastly silence fell upon the whole group of expectants. At last Mr. Cannie ventured to remark that the very handsome carpet on which our feet were now placed had been his own gift to the deceased, made to him on the understanding that his son was to be his heir, and to keep the remembrance of the boy in the testator's mind, and that he did

hope, under the circumstances, that the residuary legatee would return the carpet.

‘I beg to observe,’ said Mr. Lawson, ‘that there is a piano chosen by my daughter, and purchased by myself under precisely similar circumstances, now in this house, and I think, in common justice, that it at least should be returned to me.’

‘It appears to me, gentlemen,’ observed the residuary legatee, with a grim smile, ‘that we are all lawyers, and that any appeal to the feelings—especially upon such a ground as common justice—is ridiculous and absurd. What the law will do with the late Mr. Foracre’s property I shall be happy to tell you, on the authority of his last will and testament.’ And thereupon he read the will. It bequeathed most of his property in rather touching terms to his dear friend Alexander John Furnival, ‘in token of much kindness,’ and appointed the same his residuary legatee. It was about 4000*l.* in all, 500*l.* of which went to the housekeeper who had filched his butter.

Notwithstanding this proof of the excellent disposition of the deceased, there were some very severe things said to his discredit, and especially that he had obtained the gifts and good offices of many of those present on promises which were in fact false pretences.

‘My dear sirs,’ said the residuary legatee blandly, ‘we all went in for the prize, and unhappily only one could win it. It is possible, if it had been permitted our departed friend to live another month or two, he might have made a new disposition of his property; but, as it is, I am the fortunate heir. An excellent luncheon has, it seems, been provided for you, and though there is a question as to my liability for any such expense, I will cheerfully defray it. Let us part good friends.’

‘And do you mean to say, sir,’ exclaimed Mr. Smart, in his thinnest and sharpest tones, ‘that this fellow never mentioned to you the fact that he had led me to imagine for the last eighteen years that my son was to inherit his property?’

‘He never mentioned your name, sir, to my knowledge; but there was a memorandum folded up in the will, which I did not read, and which has reference to you. Your family burying-place, I believe, is in this parish?’

‘What the deuce has that to do with you, sir?’ inquired Mr. Smart, with irritation.

‘Nothing whatever to do with me, but something to do, it seems, with Robert Foracre. “It is my wish,” he says, “to be buried as far from Bartholomew Smart as the limits of the churchyard will permit, lest by any chance, when the devil comes to take him, as he most assuredly will, he should make any mistake.”’

‘A Book of the Opera.’

IN the halcyon times to come, always supposing that the Music of the Future is not already finding its place among the Discords of the Past, the operatic composer is to provide his own libretto; he is to be at once poet and musician; no literary middleman, adjutant, or interpreter may step between him and his applauding audience. The great musicians of old, it must be confessed, were scarcely qualified to shine as men of letters. Profound students of the intricacies of their art, both theoretical and practical, their education otherwise was often deplorably deficient. The illustrious Beethoven has been accused of clothing his æsthetic thoughts in the language of ‘illiterate awkwardness;’ Mozart could boast little learning but of a professional sort; and the notion of connecting the idea of a thinker with good old ‘Papa Haydn,’ who, we are told, used to mumble ‘aves’ when inspiration failed him in his task of composing the ‘Creation,’ has been ridiculed as ‘grotesquely incongruous.’ Of course in later times the general rise in the tide of education has reached the musicians, and evidences of increase of literary capability on their part have not been lacking. Mendelssohn’s graceful fluency of style is manifest in his private correspondence. Schumann enjoyed a university education, and was for many years the editor of a musical journal before he acquired fame as a composer; upon the literary cultivation of the Abbé Liszt there is little need to dwell. But when poet-musicians or musician-poets are under mention it is always with special reference to Herr Richard Wagner and his achievements. For in popular estimation he stands alone as the composer who has habitually and systematically supplied his music with its words, his operas with their books.

It is overlooked, perhaps, that what is called Wagnerism is not so much a system as a man; that its existence depends upon the survival of one who must soon be counted among septuagenarians. Let it be granted that the veteran composer has fully and admirably carried into action his theory that the sister arts of music and poetry should combine in opera, mutually supporting and enhancing each other, and that stage mechanism and scenic splendour should also aid to the utmost the general effect; who, when Wagner has ceased to ride the lyric whirlwind and direct the histrionic storm, will succeed to his place, continue his efforts, and fulfil his duties? Are there any shoulders ready and fitted to receive his mantle as it

falls from the skies? Will it not rather, unowned, unclaimed, sink to earth and lie soiled and unheeded in the kennel, or like a lost balloon, rent by the winds, be completely carried away and lost in outer space?

Richard Wagner's earliest efforts as a dramatic author were made in his boyhood, when he was a rather unpromising pupil, thirteen years of age, of the Kreuzschule, at Dresden. He had been studying English, in order to understand Shakespeare; the result, we are told, was an enormous tragedy, a kind of compound of 'Hamlet' and 'King Lear.' As the author writes of his own production: 'I had murdered forty-two people in the course of my piece, and was obliged to let most of them reappear as ghosts in the last acts for want of living characters.' Apparently he made no attempt to compose appropriate music for this prodigious work. Of his early operas little now seems to be known, nor is it clear that at this time he invariably penned their books. His opera 'Das Liebesverbot,' founded upon Shakespeare's 'Measure for Measure,' was performed but once, at Magdeburg, 'without due preparation or marked success.' He regarded this work, we are told, as 'the ultimate result of the sensual fermentation of his storm-and-stress period, but not without a germ of purer artistic aims.'

Envy of the success of Meyerbeer brought with it some relaxation of the poet-composer's theories, or, as yet, these possessed him but imperfectly. He meditated an opera in the Meyerbeer manner, to be produced upon the stage of the Paris Grand Opéra, with a libretto by M. Scribe, Meyerbeer's *librettiste*. To Scribe, therefore, he addressed himself, sending him the plan or sketch of an important lyric drama, founded upon Kœnig's romance of 'Die Hohe Braut,' asking him to write it out in French verse at the composer's expense, and to take the necessary measures to ensure its performance in due course at the Grand Opéra. To this extraordinary application Scribe sent no reply. The name of Richard Wagner was entirely unknown to him. He probably deemed the strange musician either very impudent or very crazy. Forthwith Wagner began upon an opera book for himself. He dramatised Lord Lytton's novel of 'Rienzi,' a work then enjoying much popularity. The libretto was of unambitious quality, displaying, as Dr. Hueffer describes it, 'a good deal of that slovenliness in diction and versification which the good-natured public of the Grand Opéra is used to tolerate.' 'Rienzi' completed, the composer carried it to Paris, furnished with letters of introduction from Meyerbeer to the theatrical managers. Paris, however, would have nothing to do with 'Rienzi.' Wagner's mission ended disastrously. He was, indeed, driven almost to the brink of starvation, compelled

to the most humiliating tasks of musical drudgery in order to earn the scantiest of livelihoods. In his curious novelette, 'The End of a Musician in Paris,' he has related with much grim humour his troubles and distresses at this period of his career. 'Rienzi' was afterwards produced at Dresden, in 1842, and with considerable success, although the best that may now be said for 'Rienzi' is perhaps that it might easily be taken for a bad opera by Meyerbeer. For Wagner commenced by admiring and imitating Meyerbeer, who had indeed shown much kindness to the young and aspiring composer. In the end, however, Wagner conceived a strange aversion for his former exemplar, condemning his compositions with unjustifiable bitterness. A psychological explanation of this acrimony has been found in the fact that Wagner's first efforts as a composer 'moved in the sphere of Meyerbeer and Hatvay;' and that from his later point of view those youthful errings and strayings seemed to demand deep reprehension and sincere repentance; he duly proceeded, therefore, to damn the sins he was no longer inclined to, and unreservedly denounced his benefactor, Meyerbeer, as 'the most despicable music-manufacturer of the period.'

Opinions may vary touching the merits of Wagner's music, but the excellence of his opera-books deserves to be universally recognised. It may chance, indeed, that Wagner will be read as an author long after the world has grown weary of listening to him as a composer. His libretto of 'Der Fliegende Holländer,' derived from Heine, who was inspired by Fitzball, who borrowed from an anonymous writer in 'Blackwood's Magazine,' may be counted among the best of opera-books—'a little masterpiece,' as Spohr described it, regretting that, for his own part, he had never met with so good a libretto to set to music. When Wagner had completed 'Der Fliegende Holländer,' he offered it to the directors of the Grand Opéra, Paris, with a suggestion that the text should be translated into French by a competent writer. The directors declined 'Der Fliegende Holländer' as they had declined 'Rienzi;' yet they did not fail to note the genuine worth of Wagner's libretto. Indeed, they rejected the score while they retained the poem—'purchased it for 500 francs,' says one account; 'stole it,' says another. They were rash enough, however, to entrust the book to the chorus-master of their theatre, M. Dietsch, a composer of very inferior quality, whose opera 'Le Vaisseau Fantôme,' produced November 9, 1842, failed completely. The production of 'Der Fliegende Holländer' in its integrity, with the original music of Herr Wagner, would certainly have been at once more enterprising and more profitable.

Wagner obtained no hearing in Paris until 1861, when his 'Tannhäuser' was produced at the Grand Opéra. Considerable difficulty had attended the translation into French of this most picturesque of opera-books, with its poetic sentiment and significance, its contrast of characters, impressive incidents, and grand situations. The task was entrusted to Edmond Roche, a young French poet, essayist, and critic; a musician, moreover, who played the violin skilfully, and had been accounted one of Habeneck's most promising pupils at the Conservatoire. A fervent admirer of Berlioz, Roche regarded Wagner with real enthusiasm. That Roche should be charged to translate Wagner seemed a most appropriate and felicitous arrangement. Roche, at this time, however, knew little of *ce terrible homme*, as he learnt afterwards to designate the famous composer. M. Sardou, who supplied a biographical notice of Roche when his posthumous poems came to be published in 1863, writes that the poor translator devoted a whole year of labour, 'le plus assidu, le plus exténuant,' to the adaptation of the German text to the French operatic stage. Roche was fairly overwhelmed and crushed by the weight of the task he had undertaken. He has given an account of one of his days with Wagner:—

'He came at seven in the morning; we were at work without rest or respite until midday. I was bent over my desk, writing, erasing, "*cherchant la fameuse syllabe qui devait correspondre à la fameuse note, sans cesser néanmoins d'avoir le sens commun*;" he was erect, pacing to and fro, bright of eye, vehement of gesture, striking the piano, shouting, singing, for ever bidding me, "Go on! go on!" An hour or even two hours after noon, hungry and exhausted, I let fall my pen. I was in a fainting state. "What's the matter?" he asked. "I am hungry." "True—I had forgotten all about that; let us have a hurried snack, and go on again." Night came and found us still at work. I was shattered, stupefied. My head burned; my temples throbbed; I was half mad with my wild search after strange words to fit the strange music; he was erect still, vigorous and fresh as when we commenced our toil, walking up and down, striking his infernal piano, terrifying me at last, as I perceived dancing about me on every side his eccentric shadow cast by the fantastic reflections of the lamp, and crying to me ever, like one of Hoffmann's creations, "Go on! go on!" while trumpeting in my ears cabalistic words and supernatural music.'

Poor M. Roche! He had some reason to complain. Wagner seems to have scornfully used him, and sought afterwards the assistance of another translator. The 'Tannhäuser' met with a most unfavourable reception; it was nearly hissed from the stage.

The opera obtained but three representations in Paris, and the name of Edmond Roche was not allowed to appear upon the programme. Poor Edmond Roche!

The world, unkind to him in his lifetime, seems even now, when he has been dead ten years, insufficiently to esteem the memory of Hector Berlioz, fairly to be viewed as the *avant-courreur*, almost as the prototype, of Wagner, skilled both as author and composer. Berlioz wrote criticisms of a fierce and aggressive sort, and provided the book of his own opera, 'Les Troyens.' Of his first opera, 'Benvenuto Cellini,' he merely selected the theme, seeking the aid of his friends, Léon de Wailly and Auguste Barbier, to prepare for him the libretto. It was generally held that the subject was unpromising for dramatic purposes, and that the playwrights had produced an ineffective work. Berlioz was quite satisfied, however, and to the last maintained, staunchly and generously, that his opera did not fail because of its book. Moreover, M. Duponchel, the director of the opera in those days, was loud in praise of the libretto, while frankly regarding the composer as 'une espèce de fou dont la musique n'était et ne pouvait être qu'un tissu d'extravagances.' To tell the truth, 'Benvenuto Cellini' was produced because it was the work of the musical critic of 'Le Journal des Débats,' an influential newspaper with which M. Duponchel thought it prudent to maintain amicable relations. The opera failed in Paris in 1838 as completely as it failed when presented on the stage of our Italian Opera, Covent Garden, in 1853. 'Benvenuto Cellini,' although admirably executed, was permitted but one representation, much interrupted towards its close by jeers and hisses. The grand scene of the casting of the colossal statue of Perseus was found to be ludicrously ineffective, and resulted in a storm of ridicule.

As originally planned, 'Les Troyens' was of prodigious length. It would have occupied some five or six hours in performance. It was founded upon the second and fourth books of the 'Æneid.' Berlioz flattered himself that he had accomplished 'un grand opéra traité dans le système shakespearien;' he had been employed during three years and a half in correcting, changing, enriching, polishing, and repolishing his work. It became necessary, however, to divide this voluminous grand opera into two parts. 'Les Troyens à Carthage,' produced in 1863 at the Théâtre Lyrique, then under M. Carvalho's direction, was but half of the original score; and after the first representation many numbers were suppressed. The opera did not fail absolutely; it enjoyed, indeed, twenty-one performances; but it scarcely succeeded; the public held somewhat aloof, and 'Les Troyens' was played to unremunerative

houses. The work was designed for the Grand Opéra; it needed a large stage and lavish scenic decoration. Berlioz, like Wagner, looked for the co-operation of all the arts in the production of opera; painting and architecture were to combine with poetry and music. On the limited stage of the Lyrique, the composer was much cramped; his designs were frustrated, his intentions misunderstood. He wanted 'plusieurs chutes d'eau réelles;' he had to be content with painted cascades; his dance of satyrs was executed by a group of little girls of twelve, who were not allowed to carry lighted torches—'les pompiers' were afraid of fire. The chorus of nymphs, instead of running about the stage picturesquely dishevelled, remained in the wings, and were scarcely audible. The thunder was weak, the orchestra scanty; the grand effect of 'la chasse pendant l'orage' failed completely, and led to a pause in the performance of fifty minutes' duration to enable the bungling machinists to change the scene. Moreover, fault was found with the book! Berlioz was accused of employing 'les mots en usage dans les guinguettes et les théâtres de vaudeville,' expressions altogether unsuited to an epic subject. After the completion but before the production of 'Les Troyens,' he wrote his two-act comic opera of 'Béatrice et Bénédict,' founding the libretto upon Shakespeare's 'Much Ado about Nothing.' 'Béatrice' was presented with some success at Baden in 1862, the part of the heroine being sustained by Madame Charton, a charming singer, who afterwards appeared as Dido in 'Les Troyens à Carthage' at the Lyrique in 1863. Certain critics from Paris pronounced that the score of 'Béatrice et Bénédict' contained 'beaucoup de broussailles,' and that the dialogue lacked spirit. Berlioz explained that the dialogue closely followed the text of Shakespeare. Berlioz, however, knew little English; he professed deep love and veneration for the poet, but he studied him through the mists of a translation. The spirit of the original might well have evaporated in the process of converting the translated comedy into an opera-book.

Berlioz held much less steadfastly than Wagner the dogma that a composer should be his own poet. It was with great satisfaction that he obtained at one time a libretto, 'La Nonne Sanglante,' from Scribe, the most adroit and successful purveyor of opera-books. But MM. Roqueplan and Duponchel, directors of the Grand Opéra, persuaded Berlioz to resign his books into their hands. They promised him the post of conductor, and explained to him that by a ministerial rule no *employé* of the opera-house could be allowed to produce upon its stage any composition of his own. He was not appointed conductor, however; he avows that the directors never really contemplated such an appointment for

one moment; they only wanted his libretto. Naturally he felt himself duped. He had already composed two acts of the opera, but these, with the exception of two arias, he afterwards destroyed. He was much addicted to the destruction of his own compositions. Still, in surrendering '*La Nonne Sanglante*,' it is clear that he did not lose much, although to the last he was wont to inveigh against the insincerity of the directors, and even accused Scribe of aiding and abetting them. '*La Nonne Sanglante*' proved to be one of the worst of Scribe's books. It was offered in turn to Halévy, to Verdi, to Grisar; they each in turn declined it. Berlioz thinks they were influenced by delicacy in his regard, and that they viewed Scribe's conduct in the matter, '*comme un assez mauvais procédé*.' It is probable that they did not like the book. Gounod finally accepted it, and his '*Nonne Sanglante*' duly appeared at the Grand Opéra in 1854, to enjoy only '*un quart de succès*' and to vanish.

The musician-poets or poet-musicians are indeed few in number unless we may count among them the lively Frenchman, M. Hervé, and the new Italian composer, Signor Boito, who has himself provided the book of his opera '*Mefistofeles*,' a new setting of the Faust legend. It is a long step down, however, from Berlioz and Wagner to the composer of *Chilpéric* and other musical extravaganzas and buffooneries. But M. Hervé's gifts, if they are small, are many; composer and playwright, he is in addition actor and singer. Not content with producing the books of his operas, he personates his own heroes and sings his own songs. Probably it is a matter of regret to him that he cannot at the same time preside in the orchestra; for M. Hervé is an admirable conductor.

There is a story told of an English composer who, after a fashion, supplied the verses of an opera he was required to produce. It was in the year 1830 that Mr. John Barnett, presently to become famous for his '*Mountain Sylph*' and other works, was engaged by Charles Kemble, then manager of Covent Garden Theatre, to compose the music of an opera to be entitled '*The Carnival of Naples*.' William Dimond, at one time famous as the author of various melodramas,—'*The Conquest of Taranto*,' '*The Lady and the Devil*,' and '*The Foundling of the Forest*,' being among them,—had agreed to furnish the libretto of '*The Carnival of Naples*.' Mr. Dimond lived on the continent, however; pecuniary and other troubles and liabilities kept him permanently apart from his native land. He sent from abroad a sort of skeleton book, a sketch in prose of his subject, desiring Mr. Barnett to select the situations most adapted for embellishment, and to write nonsense-verse in such measure as he thought appropriate; Mr. Dimond promising

that he would by-and-by substitute regular and intelligible rhymes for the composer's doggerel. He undertook, indeed, to fit his words to the music without ever hearing it or seeing the score, his sole guide being Mr. Barnett's nonsense-verses. But by some accident, when the opera came to be read in the green-room to the assembled actors and singers engaged to take part in the representation, the nonsense-verses and not the poet's rhymes were placed in the hands of the stage-manager, Mr. Bartley, who officiated as reader upon the occasion. Now, Mr. Bartley was a skilled elocutionist, rejoicing in his fine vocal tones, holding always that, if the sound of a speech was properly attended to, the sense might be left to take care of itself. He knew nothing of the mischance that had placed the wrong manuscript before him. In his best manner he entered upon his task and declaimed the first lyrical piece in the drama, beginning with some such lines as—

The beauteous orbs of day amid the silent skies
Are laughing all serenely beneath the raging main.

The audience murmured approval. Some whispered 'Charming!' others, 'Chaste! So like Dimond! There's no mistaking his style!' Only the composer was ill at ease, recognising his own rubbish. Still he thought it prudent to hold his peace until the reading was concluded. He then took Mr. Bartley aside, whispering to him: 'Do you know that you have been reading my doggerel instead of Dimond's poetry?' Bartley was much amazed, and then, dreading that much ridicule might attach to his own share in the business, entreated secrecy. 'I'll make it all right,' he said; 'I'll take care that the prompter has the correct copy. For Heaven's sake, don't breathe a word of this to mortal creature, or I shall never hear the last of it!' The opera was duly produced with Mr. Dimond's verses. It contained some fifteen numbers, songs, duets, trios, choruses, concerted pieces, and finales, coupled with nonsense lines in the first instance, and afterwards finding a more suitable match in Mr. Dimond's sense, assuming that his effusions could be so described. 'The Carnival of Naples' proved completely successful. It introduced to a London audience a charming singer and actress in Miss Taylor, afterwards known as Mrs. Walter Lacy.

The operatic composers of the past were certainly not careful about their books. The little French melodrama upon which Beethoven founded his 'Fidelio' was hardly worthy of his regard; it resembles a poor pebble magnificently set in massive gold. Leonora is perhaps the grandest character in the whole repertory of opera; the other of the *dramatis personæ*, however, are insigni-

ficant and uninteresting enough. But as Stella declared of Swift that he could write beautifully about a broomstick, so it may be affirmed of Beethoven that he composed sublimely upon the poorest of themes. And even in Beethoven's time '*Léonore, ou l'Amour Conjugal*,' was a trite subject, already set to music by Gaveaux and Paer. Weber, though he trusted to others for his books, so far anticipated Wagner as to hold the principle 'that the dramatic stage should combine as much as possible all the excellences of every sister art,' incurring thereby the ridicule and the reproaches of Tieck for troubling himself about 'frivolous and absurd minutiae.' Tieck protested, indeed, that it was beneath a man of influence and genius to display so much little-minded anxiety about scenery, decoration, and 'machinery nonsense.' Still, Weber was not to be dissuaded from attending to the 'mounting' of the opera of '*Der Freischütz*;' 'every scrap of scenery,' writes his biographer, 'every trifle among the properties, every effect of lighting was examined, rehearsed, altered, and improved under his direction.' He took heed that the eagle and the owl introduced in the course of the drama should be properly manufactured, and made the theatrical costumier consult certain carved mediæval figures of huntsmen, exclaiming, 'Now copy me these old fellows for my *Freischütz* people.' His next opera, however, was to incur something very like failure for all his anxiety and labour to obtain a likely and promising book. He had first thought of setting the '*Cid*' to music, then of a libretto upon the story of *Dido*; finally he trusted himself to the untender mercies of an elderly poetess, *Helmine von Chezy*; the deplorably dull book of '*Euryanthe*' was the result. No wonder the wits dubbed the opera '*Ennuyante*;' just as the French version of the '*Zauberflöte*' of Mozart, '*Les Mystères d'Isis*,' came to be commonly known among the comical as '*Les Misères d'Ici*.' It should be added, however, that the apparently childish drama of the '*Zauberflöte*' has been invested by some critics with deeply significant symbolism. Though composed avowedly as a *Singspiel* for a Viennese Volkstheater, the '*Zauberflöte*' so charmed Goethe, much possessed by mystical tendencies during his later years, that he offered to write an opera-book continuing the subject.

It is to be observed that no operatic subject can be monopolised by a composer; he cannot hinder other musicians from borrowing his libretto and attaching it to a new score. There is a '*Medea*' by Benda and there is a '*Medea*' by Simon Mayer, as well as a '*Medea*' by Cherubini; Lully's '*Armide*' did not hinder the production of Gluck's '*Armide*' or of Handel's '*Rinaldo*;' there is a '*Barbiere*' by Paesello and there is a '*Barbiere*' by Rossini; the

story of Semiramis had been set to music by both Catel and Bianchi before Rossini took it in hand; Spohr produced a new opera upon the subject of *Zémire et Azor* (Beauty and the Beast) which Grétry had already rendered famous; the books of Auber's '*Philtre*,' and Donizetti's '*Elisir d'Amore*,' of Flotow's '*Marta*' and Balfe's '*Maid of Honour*,' of Auber's '*Gustave III.*' and Verdi's '*Ballo in Maschera*' closely correspond; Carafa's '*Masaniello*' preceded Auber's '*Mutte de Portici*.' In his autobiography Spohr relates that he had projected an opera upon the story of '*Der Schwarze Jäger*,' when he learnt that Weber was already at work upon '*Der Freischütz*.' Forthwith Spohr abandoned his plan; 'for with my music,' he frankly avows, 'which is not adapted to please the multitude and excite the popular enthusiasm, I should never have met with the unexampled success obtained by "*Der Freischütz*."'
Weber at one time contemplated as a subject for an opera that mediæval legend of *Tannhäuser* which Richard Wagner was afterwards so prodigiously to set to music. Spohr's '*Faust*,' it may be noted, did not really anticipate the '*Faust*' of Gounod; Spohr's fable has little in common with Goethe's or even Marlow's version of the legend, but has for heroine a lady called *Cunegonda* whose lover is named *Hugo*, the most prominent events in the drama being the siege and destruction of an enchanted castle.

While Wagner was eager for the translation of his opera books into French, Rossini opposed any such tampering with his works, holding that Italian operas should be sung in Italian, German operas in German, French operas in French. Nevertheless, versions of '*Otello*,' '*Il Barbiere*,' and '*Semiramide*,' were prepared for representation at the Grand Opéra, Paris. M. Méry, who had provided the French edition of '*Semiramide*,' proposed to submit his translation to the composer. Rossini replied: '*Je vous regarde comme mon ami; vous m'avez assuré que vous teniez à mon amitié. Eh bien, si vous y tenez réellement, ne me montrez rien.*' The opera of '*Guillaume Tell*,' however, was expressly composed for the Grand Opéra, and Rossini himself re-arranged his '*Mosé in Egitto*' for the same establishment. And apart from translation, a certain convertibility has attached to opera-books in reference to questions of religion, of politics, and of copyright. In England, although we have tolerated Auber's setting of the parable of the Prodigal Son, it has been deemed necessary in the interests of propriety to transform the Moses of Rossini's opera into Zoroaster or Peter the Hermit, and Verdi's *Nabuco* into Nino or Atrato. Before Italy was free and united, it was usual to present '*Guillaume Tell*' at Milan under the title of '*Wallace*;' while at Rome '*Lucrezia Borgia*' was called now '*La Rinnegata*,' and now '*Elisa da Foscò*.'

The censorship further required that Bellini's 'Norma' should appear as 'La Foresta d'Irminsul,' for the word *Norma*, in the sense of *guide* or *rule*, had become ecclesiastical property from its connection with such books as 'Norma per vivere devotamente;' 'Norma della prima comunione,' &c. In Russia it has also been required that certain operatic subjects should undergo changes of nationality and of character to render them inoffensive to an absolute government.

Copyright difficulties in regard to opera-books have occurred chiefly in France. In 1840, Victor Hugo contested the right of the Italian librettists to make free with his dramas, and obtained of the law-courts a decision in his favour. Forthwith the authors of 'La Pie Voleuse,' 'La Grâce de Dieu,' &c., sought to restrict the representation of 'La Gazza Ladra,' 'Linda di Chamouni,' &c. When Mr. Lumley in 1850 undertook the management of the Italian opera-house, he found himself unable to produce such works as 'La Fille du Régiment,' 'Ernani,' 'Rigoletto,' &c., without the consent of the original authors of the dramas upon which those operas were founded. He applied to Victor Hugo for permission to present 'Lucrezia Borgia;' M. Hugo peremptorily refused. He had been annoyed, perhaps, by certain evasive performances in the French provinces of his play, with Donizetti's music, under the new name of 'Nizza di Grenada;' and he alleged that his 'Lucrèce Borgia' was about to be produced at the Français for Mdlle. Rachel. Mr. Lumley sought the aid of Rachel, who interceded on his behalf with the dramatist, while she disclaimed all intention of ever appearing as Lucrèce Borgia. Terms were at last arranged: Mr. Lumley was permitted six representations both of Donizetti's 'Lucrezia' and Verdi's 'Ernani,' on condition that payment was made to M. Hugo of ten per cent. upon the gross receipts of each evening. The system of 'authors' rights' is firmly rooted in France, and spreads widely its branches. It has even been decided that the descendants and heirs of Beaumarchais are still entitled to share in the profits arising from any performance in France of Mozart's 'Nozze de Figaro.'

To a librettist it may be said that nothing is sacred: he considers everything in its relation to the uses of music. Literature is to him so many opera-books. Now he seeks subjects in the pages of Scripture, now in historical records, in fairy tales, the legends of romance, in the works of poets and playwrights, of novelists and story-tellers of all periods and countries. Usually he deals with dramas of established popularity, however, studding them with songs, if need be converting their prose into verse, and arranging effective concerted pieces and *ensembles*; for it has been judged

that the public likes best operas founded upon familiar subjects, the union of music with thoroughly intelligible themes, lest the intentions of the composer should be misconceived, or his interpreters should fail to make themselves understood. It may be difficult to gather the signification of a story, however melodiously illustrated, that is not told in plain speech but in song, sometimes in sing-song. Probably it was due to the popularity and the fame of M. Hugo's plays, less than to any special fitness they possessed for operatic purposes, that they were transferred one after another to the musical stage; and in like manner may be accounted for the gradual annexing by the composers of the tragedies and comedies of Shakespeare, the plays now of Voltaire, now of Corneille, of Racine, Beaumarchais, Goethe, Byron, Goldsmith, and many more. Even now the success of any play is a sort of justification of its conversion into opera. The prosperity enjoyed by the melodrama of 'The Duke's Motto' fully excused its appearance as 'Blanche de Nevers,' an opera by Balfe, at Covent Garden; 'La Dame aux Camélias' produced 'La Traviata;' from 'Don César de Bazan' came 'Maritana;' from the 'Colleen Bawn,' 'The Lily of Killarney.' The late Mr. Fitzball has narrated how he once planned to found an opera-book upon the favourite drama of 'The Corsican Brothers:' Mr. Balfe had agreed to provide the music, and Mr. Sims Reeves had undertaken to personate the twins Fabien and Louis: the project, however, was not carried into execution. Shakespeare, it may be observed, has been the inciting cause of many musical compositions, and certain of these are charmingly graceful and melodious; but no opera quite of the first class has been founded upon a Shakespearean play. The operas are born and perish; but the plays live on immortal. There are at least half-a-dozen operatic settings of 'Romeo and Juliet,' without counting the symphony of Berlioz: but in no case has the composer risen to the height of the poet. At one time there was promise that a musician really worthy of the dramatist had taken one of his plays in hand. M. Scribe had moulded the 'Tempest' into the form of a libretto: some violence was done to the poet, no doubt, and yet, from the point of view of French opera, the task was not unskilfully performed; and Mendelssohn had consented to compose the music within a specified period. 'I shall try to do it,' he wrote, 'try with all my heart, and as well as I can.' But his ardour cooled, or he lost heart; he liked Scribe's libretto less and less. By-and-by, Mendelssohn dead, it fell to the ingenious but uninspired M. Halévy to set to music Scribe's edition of Shakespeare's play. The result was one of those successes that are merely failures in disguise. The most admired number in Halévy's score was an

arrangement of Dr. Arne's, 'Where the Bee sucks;' it was no longer a song, but Carlotta Grisi danced exquisitely to the melody.

Operas are sometimes weighed down by the badness of their books; they are as bank-notes wrapped round stones and sunk. On the other hand, a good book may float mediocre music. Some French opera-books are so excellent, that in a translated form they have shone independently as plays, dispensing with the music for which they first existed. Divorce is occasionally obtained in regard to the marriage of music and immortal verse. For music is not really of long life, although here and there may be found exceptional instances of longevity. Few operas that are more than fifty years old now find a place upon the musical stage.

DUTTON COOK.

Donna Quirote.

BY JUSTIN M^CCARTHY.

CHAPTER XXX.

'AN EXCELLENT PLOT: VERY GOOD FRIENDS.'

ROBERT CHARLTON doubtless believed for a while in the truth of Paulina's story. From the first he had been eager to believe in it. He detested Fielding. He felt a sort of spite, the reason for which he could hardly have defined even to himself, against Gabrielle. He had always predicted that something would be found out to Fielding's discredit; and his prophetic insight seemed now made good at last. Therefore he went into Paulina's story with an eager hope that it might prove true.

But it was really wonderful what a plausible, consistent tale Paulina told him, and what scraps of corroboratory evidence she brought to sustain it. She made rather Robert Charlton her confidant in the beginning; her leading counsel, so to speak, who was to advise upon the case and its further progress. Philip Vanthorpe and she were married in haste, she said, and after a while they did not get on very well together. They made the acquaintance of Clarkson Fielding; they were very intimate with him; Philip and he led a very wild life together. Fielding died in New Orleans. Vanthorpe and she had been anxious to return to England, and also anxious to get rid of each other. Philip was convinced his mother would never be reconciled with him, nor did he want to be reconciled to her. But he thought if Paulina were to pass off as his widow she would have a good chance of being taken into favour, and therefore it was settled between them that Paulina was to go back to England with a story of his death and to make the best use she could of it. Then came the death of Clarkson Fielding, and it suddenly occurred to Vanthorpe that it would be a good thing if he were to personate Clarkson Fielding, and see whether he could not recover the money which Fielding had always told them he had left untouched in his brother's hands. The idea had a great fascination for Vanthorpe, who liked audacious enterprises of any kind, and he determined to carry it out. Therefore the pair came to England almost at the same time, but not in the same vessel, and they went to work with their plot. They were to help each other as much as possible, and were to divide

the spoils if necessary ; but they were not going to live together any more or to acknowledge each other. It was the principal object of each to be rid of the other. 'But,' Paulina added, 'I wasn't going to stand his marrying another woman while Paulina Vanthorpe was alive; not if I knew it. That wasn't in the bargain, and he was a great fool to think any woman would stand that.'

That was the story. The points which Paulina impressed upon Charlton were, that the man calling himself Clarkson Fielding and she turned up in London just about the same time, and she appealed to Charlton whether it was not within his own knowledge that this man came to see her often when she was on the Surrey side; that Gabrielle, when first she saw him, was convinced that he was Philip Vanthorpe, from his likeness to Mrs. Leven ; that Gabrielle had even taxed him with being Philip Vanthorpe ; that Sir Wilberforce Fielding said he should never have known him for his brother ; that the professed Fielding never could or would give any clear account of what happened to Vanthorpe ; that he and she had always lived in New Orleans under the name of Clarkson, a name which a man whose real name had 'any Clarkson in it,' as Paulina put it, would not have been likely to adopt for the purpose of concealing his identity.

Eager as he was to believe all this, Robert could not but ask how it happened that the man calling himself Clarkson Fielding had done so much to prevent Gabrielle Vanthorpe and her relations from receiving Paulina. Paulina laughed at what she called his simplicity. All that only came about, she said, when they found that Mrs. Leven was inexorable, and that nothing was to be got out of her ; while, on the other hand, Sir Wilberforce was very good-natured, and there was ever so much to be got out of him. Then they believed the best policy was to throw all their strength into what Paulina described as 'the Fielding business,' and it was thought a capital way of turning off any suspicion of conspiracy, and making it certain that he was the real Clarkson Fielding, if he were to play the part of her enemy and to denounce her to the Levens. She was to have her share of the profits, she said ; and they had even some hope that, as Sir Wilberforce was not married, Clarkson might in the end come in for the property. It was understood that the so-called Clarkson was to be free, for this reason, to do his best to prevent the marriage between Sir Wilberforce and Gabrielle. 'But it wasn't understood,' Paulina grimly said, 'that he was to marry her himself. He must know precious little of women if he fancied any woman would stand that. He ought to have known more of me, anyhow. I didn't care who

he made love to and that sort of thing; but he's not going to marry a woman under my eyes, you ~~may~~ be sure.'

One chance, or apparently chance, allusion threw Robert into such a condition that he would have been glad to believe her if she had charged the so-called Clarkson Fielding with any series of crimes she chose to fancy. 'Why did he live in Bolingbroke Place?' Charlton happened to ask.

'Oh, don't you know?' Paulina asked, with an odd little laugh.

'No, I don't,' Charlton said roughly; 'tell me.'

'Well, I don't know, I'm sure—one oughtn't to tell, perhaps. Can't you guess at all?'

'I can't guess; I want you to tell me.' He was now growing hot and angry. 'I must know.'

'Well, I say, you are a soft one! I don't know, you see, Charlton, any more than you. He never told me, you may be sure, any more than he did you; not likely. I only guess. But then I seem to know a little more of the world than you do, anyhow.'

'I wish you would speak plainly,' Charlton said, jumping from his seat.

'Lord, man, you needn't get so excited about it. You needn't care twopence; your little wife is as good as a little angel, anyone can see that; but she's a very pretty little woman, Charlton, and you don't ought to be surprised that other men should admire her as well as her husband. Lord bless you, men are all alike. The times that men would have made love to me, if I had only allowed them! But I was always like your little wife, Charlton—keep them at a distance always, that's my motto, even the best of them. You see what thanks I am getting from my husband.'

Robert felt himself almost going wild with passion. He hated Paulina now; but he would have made himself her slave for the purpose of seeing her plans prove successful. Half-unconsciously, not without some consciousness, he kept suggesting doubts as to certain parts of her story, and with the doubts the additions or explanations that might satisfy them. Paulina caught at every hint, and was ready with any missing links of evidence. The story grew into shape and consistency.

These conferences took place in Janet's presence; only her and her attractiveness was held during a short time. She was virtually thrust into a corner. Her opinion was never asked. She had to sit and look on while these arrangements were made under her eyes. Robert would not have been so tall, if she attempted to interpose a word.

showy woman acted as if the household were her own. She came every day, and Robert put ~~everything~~ aside for her. Janet could hardly recognise him any more. He was like what she had sometimes read of—a man possessed by a demon. ~~She~~ ^{She} began to be ashamed of him as well as afraid. ~~The~~ ^{Her} place and her whole life were becoming hateful to her.

‘Robert,’ she began one evening, after the odious visitor had gone, ‘how long are we to have this horrid woman coming here?’

He looked up, and for a while did not seem as if he intended to answer the question. At last he said:

‘Until I understand the whole of her story. I am advising her how to proceed. You ought to feel for her, Janet; any woman ought to feel for her.’

‘I so hate her,’ Janet said, unable to keep down her feelings.

‘Oh, of course,’ he said coldly; ‘I ought to have remembered—women always hate other women.’

‘It isn’t that, Robert; I don’t hate every woman; but I do hate her, and I don’t believe her story.’

‘You wouldn’t believe anything against him, to be sure,’ he said, with a sneer. ‘I knew that long ago.’

Janet grew red, but did not resent his words.

‘I am sure she’s not telling the truth,’ she went on. ‘Why, Robert, I can see her myself; she catches up everything you say and makes it fit into her story. I can see it.’

‘Perhaps you had better say I am in a conspiracy with her to make up a string of lies. Is that your idea?’

‘Oh, no,’ poor Janet said. ‘I know you don’t mean it, Robert; but if you were listening as I am, you would see how she catches at things. If you watched her as I do, you would not believe her, I am sure, Robert. You would not, indeed.’

‘I did not know that you were so observant a person, or such a judge of evidence. Hadn’t you better become a criminal lawyer at once, Janet?’

‘And then it seems so cruel and so ungrateful,’ Janet said. ‘There are we plotting hour after hour with this woman to bring grief to the only person who ever was really kind to us since we were married. I wonder at you, Robert; I do.’

‘Who is the only person who was kind to us?’ he asked, with livid cheeks. ‘Do you mean that fellow—because he paid you compliments, I suppose, and flattered your silly vanity?’

‘I mean Mrs. Vanthorpe,’ Janet answered, and there was a certain dignity in her simple, firm manner. ‘She was kind to us; she tried to do good for us; she always treated you as if you were a

friend, Robert, and—and—a gentleman; and I hate to see you joining with this woman against her.' Janet's voice began to give way, and she was evidently on the edge of a burst of tears.

'Why, you fool, do you call that joining against her to save her from being taken in by a man who has a wife already? Why, you are a greater fool than even I thought you—I tell you I am acting as her best friend would act. I am saving her from the schemes of a scoundrel and helping to have them exposed.'

'But I don't believe a word that woman says,' Janet said, falling back on her old position. 'And why should we be the persons to do it? Oh, she will hate us—at least, she won't hate us, perhaps, for she is too good and too sweet for that; but she will think badly of us and despise us. If there is any truth in this story, why don't you go and give her fair warning of it, like a man? Let me go and tell her—oh, Robert, do. It wouldn't seem so bad then as all this secrecy and all this plotting—it looks like plotting. Let me go and tell her.'

'Go and tell her that your husband is plotting against her? That is just what you would like to do, I dare say—'

'Oh, no, Robert; how can you say so? Only just to warn her; just to put her on her guard, that the poor young lady mayn't be taken quite by surprise. Why, Robert, it might kill her.'

'Perhaps you would like to go and warn him too, lest he should be taken by surprise? You had just better do so.'

Janet's colour came up again. She began to despise her husband. She was silent. Her silence seemed to impress him somehow more than her words had done; for he said after a while, in a tone intended to be gentle and more persuasive:

'Look here, Janet: you are very foolish. Don't you see that this woman's story may prove not to be true at all? And why should we torment Mrs. Vanthorpe about a story that may be all false? I am sifting this woman's statement very carefully. I hope you will admit that I am not wholly devoid of brains, although I am your husband, Janet; and if I find that it breaks down, you may be sure I shall know how to act. But it would be simple madness to breathe a word of it to Mrs. Vanthorpe just yet. Your supposed friendship would only lead you into a mere act of unnecessary cruelty. Don't you see that yourself?'

'If I only could think that you wished it not to be true! But you go on to her as if you wanted it all to come out true.'

'It's nothing to me whether it's true or false; only, if it is true, I don't want an innocent lady made a victim and a scoundrel to go

unpunished. Perhaps you would rather see the lady victimised than the scoundrel punished; but that isn't my way.'

'But why does that woman come here to us? I hate to see her always here.'

'Jealous of her, I suppose?' Robert said, with a sneer. 'I don't think you need be alarmed, Janet.'

'She is a beast,' said Janet emphatically.

Robert laughed. 'Just like women,' he said. 'I believe she is a little bit jealous of you, Janet.'

'Jealous of me?' Janet asked in wonder and anger. She was growing surprisingly courageous of late.

'Oh, yes, I think so. She is under the impression that her husband was quite taken by your charms.'

'Her husband?'

'Yes, her husband. The fellow that used to live below stairs. She is under the impression that he took chambers here in order to have the pleasure of looking at you.'

'I didn't believe he was her husband before,' said Janet; 'I know he is not now. I know there isn't a word of truth in all she says. Look here, Robert: I won't have that woman coming here any more. No, I'll not have it.'

Charlton looked up amazed. His wife was standing up now, and there was a sparkle in her eyes such as he had not seen before. She was trembling all over; but she had evidently plucked up a spirit.

The stairs of Bolingbroke Place were given to much creaking. The step of a mounting visitor was heard a long way in advance when there was no other noise prevailing. This was now the quiet evening hour—about six, when Bolingbroke Place was having its tea. The silence of the house was disturbed for Charlton and his wife by the light rapid tread of a woman coming up the stairs. It came nearer and nearer.

'It is she!' Janet exclaimed. 'Oh, yes, it's she.'

'It's who?' Charlton asked, catching some of his wife's excitement.

'It's Mrs. Vanthorpe! I know her step; she's coming here.'

Robert jumped up.

'Now, remember, Janet, if you say a word of this, you may make her miserable for nothing; and I'll never forgive you.'

Janet was moving towards the door. He came between and stopped her way.

'Do you understand?' he asked in a fierce, low tone. 'You are not to say a word; not a word.'

‘I understand,’ Janet said. ‘I’ll say nothing, Robert—for her sake, mind.’

‘For any sake you like,’ he replied, ‘as long as you hold your tongue.’ Then he gave way and allowed her to open the door, which she did even before Gabrielle had knocked.

Gabrielle came in looking like a living illustration of youth and grace and happiness. There was a certain shyness about her manner not usual to it, and which perhaps gave it another charm. She felt her own happiness so much that it made her timid. It seemed to her that she owed a sort of apology to human beings in general for being so happy when they perhaps were not all so. Besides, she had come with the resolve to carry out a somewhat difficult, or at least a somewhat delicate, purpose with the Charltons. She kissed the pale Janet and shook hands with Robert.

‘You are looking very pale, Janet,’ she said. ‘Is she not well, Mr. Charlton?’

‘Thank you,’ he answered, ‘I don’t fancy she is unwell. I haven’t heard her complain.’

‘Ah, but I am afraid that is not quite a proof—I don’t think she would complain. She is too much in town, Mr. Charlton; and you too. I see now that you are looking very pale. You ought to get out of this place for a while.’

‘People like us can’t so easily get out of town; we must stay where our work is. We are no worse off than our neighbours, I dare say.’

His manner was somewhat sharp and brusque; but Gabrielle did not feel in any way hurt by it. She set it down to the not unnatural pride of an unsuccessful man who is resolved to show that he seeks no favour. Just now his words were welcome to her, for they gave her a chance of coming to her point.

‘Well,’ she said, ‘I came to see Janet and you to-day for the purpose of saying something about that. You know, I suppose’—and she hesitated a little and coloured—‘that I am going to be married soon—to Mr. Fielding?’

Yes; the Charltons both stammered out that they had heard, and Robert added something about congratulations. As for Janet, she trembled so that she could hardly make herself heard.

‘Well, after that we are going out of England for some time; perhaps rather a long time. I have no one to live in my house—I don’t know yet what I shall do with it in the end, but it must remain as it is for some time; and Mr. and Mrs. Bramble will stay in it as they do now for the present. Now, what I thought of was this—if you and Janet would kindly occupy it while I am away—a year, perhaps, or so—it would be a great favour, and take ever so

much responsibility off my hands. It is a nice place, you know, with good air and open space all around, and the park, and its own little patch of ground; and I think you would find it a pleasant change. Janet would like it, I am sure.' She looked from one to the other with half-shy eagerness.

'You are very kind,' Robert said; 'but I am afraid one must keep near one's work.'

'Oh, but I have thought of all that. We are not so stupid about business affairs, we women, Mr. Charlton, as you think us—are we, Janet? Of course I know that people couldn't be expected to find you out in a little house hidden away among trees. But our idea—Mr. Fielding's and mine—was to look you out a place in one of the streets quite near where you could have your studio or workroom, or whatever you like to call it, and where you could go during the day, and Janet too; and you could have your name up, and you would get no end of work there, Mr. Fielding thinks. In fact, he says that an artist of your skill is quite thrown away in a place like this. In that other end of the town he is sure you would soon get a splendid lot of work, and you would grow rich, Janet and you, even before we came back, perhaps.'

'It's very kind of Mr. Fielding to think of us poor people,' Robert said; 'we are very much obliged to him.'

Janet could only sob out, 'Oh, Mrs. Vanthorpe!' and take Gabrielle's hand and press it to her lips. Gabrielle did not understand the repelling tone of the one or the emotion of the other.

'In truth,' she went on, 'we have in our minds just the place for you; we saw it the other day, and it can be had at once—if you will only let me take it for you. Come now, my friends,' she said, going straight to the heart of the matter at once, 'will you not let me do this poor little piece of kindness for you, and help to make me happy—to make me more happy, I mean; for indeed I am so happy myself that I long to bring others in to share it with me. Come, Mr. Charlton, you won't refuse me this pleasure? Janet, you will tell your husband that he need not be quite so independent as to refuse a little trifling bit of kindness from a very sincere friend? I should welcome any mark of friendship from anyone I liked. Why not?'

Charlton walked up and down the room. He could not make up his mind or arrange the strife of his fighting soul in a moment. One inclination was to throw himself on Gabrielle's generosity and confess the whole of the base plot into which he had been entering against her. Another was to reject her offer with bitterness because it came from Fielding, of whom now especially, since Paulina's suggestions, he could hardly think with patience.

Perhaps his better inclination might have prevailed. Perhaps he might have yielded to the softening and sweetening influence of Gabrielle's kindness and flung away his miserable morbid hates and spites and owned himself repentant. If he had done so things would have gone differently with him. But at that moment a tap was heard at the door, and Gabrielle sprang to her feet.

'Oh, here is Mr. Fielding,' she said. 'He has just come in time to help me to persuade you.' And she ran herself and opened the door and brought Fielding in. His presence seemed to fill the dull old room with cheerfulness and energy.

'Have you talked over this dreadful old man?' he asked, after the first exchange of salutations. 'Do you know, Gabrielle, how old he is? He is a hundred and ninety years old at least; and Janet is fifteen. He is so old that he grows quite crabbed, and he won't let anyone be pleasant with him. We used to have such arguments, he and I. But he's a good fellow at heart, Gabrielle; and a manly, independent fellow. His failings lean—I wouldn't exactly say to virtue's side, but to the side of a sort of gnarled and rugged wild-growth of virtue.' Fielding rattled on in this way with the object of saving Charlton as long as he could from the embarrassment of having to give an answer or make any acknowledgment.

'You are both very kind, I am sure,' Charlton began. 'We don't well know what to say. We are not very happy at expressing ourselves, Janet and I.'

'Never mind expressing yourselves,' Fielding struck in. 'Eloquence, my dear Charlton, is the gift of men of genius like our friend Lefussis; men born to sway the multitude and the fierce democracy, and all that. It isn't for common men like you and me. All we would ask you now Gabrielle and I—is just to turn this little affair over in your mind and give it a favourable consideration—you and Janet together. Then you'll tell us another time; not now; we don't want an answer now. I want Janet to have her chance of thinking it over; she has ever so much more sense than you have. We are stupid fellows, we men. When I have a wife, I shall do everything she asks me to do. That is the right way, Janet, don't you think so?'

Fielding could not rouse either of the pair into any show of animation. Gabrielle could not understand how there came to be such a cloud of constraint over them all. The talk of Fielding, even, was evidently only inspired by a forced cheerfulness. Perhaps the manner of the Charltons was owing to excess of gratitude, she thought; but really the favour did not seem by any means great.

enough to call for such emotion. She would have wished to do a great deal more for them; but this seemed about as much as Charlton would be likely to accept. It only amounted to the lending of Gabrielle's house for some undefined time, and to the setting-up Charlton for a year or two in a West End studio or workroom, where he would have a better chance of making a business and a reputation. Nothing more was said on the subject. They talked for a while; but there was no heart in the talk, somehow. Gabrielle felt depressed.

'We must meet again before—before I leave England,' she said. 'You will come and see me, Janet; I am staying at Lady Honeybell's now. But if you and your husband will do me the kindness to occupy my little house, then I can see you ever so often, and that would be much better.'

She kissed Janet again, and she was positively alarmed by Janet's pale face and moist eyes, her trembling lips and affrighted, miserable looks.

CHAPTER XXXI.

PAULINA 'AT HOME.'

FROM light of any sort into gloom is usually a depressing change. The gloom of the staircase in any Bolingbroke Place tenement is especially sombre and dispiriting. The light in the Charltons' room was, at all events, sunlight—as much of it as could get in; the slanting sunlight of evening. It ought to have been a depressing thing to pass suddenly from that sun-lighted room to a darksome and mournful staircase, that seemed to tell of only poverty and shabby failure. But our lovers felt only a sense of relief when they emerged from the light into the gloom. Nor was this merely because they were lovers, glad to be alone anywhere, carrying in whatever darkness their own little halo of peculiar light around them. There was something in the very atmosphere of the Charltons now that depressed and dispirited. Even the gladness of lovers felt rebuked and chilled in that sad companionship.

'They seem unhappy,' Gabrielle said as she and Fielding were going down the stairs together.

'I can't quite make Charlton out to-day,' Fielding answered; 'perhaps I can't quite make him out ever. He seems almost always morose and discontented; he works hard, poor fellow, and not much seems to come of it. But this evening he is particularly out of spirits—seems to be like what the Scotch call *fey*.'

'I wish we could do something to make them happy.'

'Perhaps we shall; perhaps he will get into a more reasonable mood; Janet may prevail on him. Gabrielle, you never saw my rooms? You never even looked into them. Come, you must give one glance in now before you go, and leave a memory of brightness and love there. I shall always hold them in my recollection as if they were a shrine, because it was there I lived when I first knew you. I hope to be able to get Lefussis to take them: they are much better than his; and if I could only juggle him into some belief that he is to have them on the same terms, and if I could make up the difference without his knowledge—— But all these fellows are so ferociously independent, one does not know how to manage them.'

'You talk of ferocious independence, who would not even accept a benefit at the hands of a wife!'

'Well, that's a different thing, don't you see. These are my rooms; this is the door. Come, you must cross the threshold and consecrate the place for poor old Lefussis. Then he'll find some breath of happiness in the old den that he never will be able to account for to the end of his days. Apparently some one has been lighting my lamp for me. How considerate!'

Fielding opened the door and held it open for Gabrielle to pass in. She had barely crossed the threshold when she saw that there was some one, a woman, already in the room. She did not draw back; she assumed that it was some servant or caretaker who had been lighting the lamp. She entered the room. The woman turned towards her, and Gabrielle saw that she was in the presence of Paulina Vanthorpe. Paulina was there, without bonnet, or shawl, or cloak, like one at home.

'This is the old den, Gabrielle,' Fielding said as he followed her into the room.

Gabrielle stepped back and laid her hand upon his arm, as if to stay him from going any farther. It flashed across her mind that Paulina was mad. Fielding broke into an exclamation of surprise and anger at seeing the woman there.

'You didn't expect to see me, I know,' Paulina began in her grandest tone. 'No, I am an unwelcome apparition. But I am here, and I propose to stay here.'

'How did you get in here?' Fielding asked sternly. 'I can do nothing for you. You must leave this place.'

Paulina laughed scornfully.

'You had no right to enter my room,' Fielding said.

'Have I not? Yes, but I have, though—and I'll soon show you that I have. Gabrielle Vanthorpe, I am sorry for you. I said I would never harm or annoy you; and no more I would now, if

could ; but you will know in the end what a service I am doing you, and you will thank me for it one day.'

'What are we to do?' Gabrielle asked in a low tone. 'The poor creature is mad.'

'I don't think it's madness,' Fielding said. 'I fancy it is a different cause. Look here, Mrs Clarkson——'

'My name is not Clarkson——'

'Well, Vanthorpe, then—whatever you like—it is of no use your coming here and thrusting yourself on me. I can do nothing for you. You have taken your own course, and you know very well that this lady has already been only too kind to you. Why do you continue to annoy and alarm her? What do you want? Why do you come here? What good can you get by such foolery?'

'I have come here because this is my proper home, as you know well. Oh, yes, you are a very clever actor, as *I* know well, and you can play the part of injured innocence delightfully; but I tell you what—the game is up. I didn't mind until I heard that you were going to get married—married!'—and she laughed an hysterical laugh—'and I wasn't going to stand that, you know. Oh, no! So the game is up; I'll not play my part in it any more.'

'Come away, Gabrielle,' said Fielding; 'this is no place for you.' He now began to be convinced that she was right, and that Paulina's various excitements had ended in madness. 'Come away; and I'll see to this poor thing afterwards. Come, Gabrielle.'

'Come, Gabrielle,' Paulina said, mocking him. 'Come, Gabrielle! But I say, No, Gabrielle. Gabrielle don't leave this room until she hears who you are, and what a trap she was near falling into. Gabrielle, do you know who that man is?'

'Yes,' Gabrielle answered quietly; 'I do.' Somehow it seemed to her that Paulina was not mad.

'Are you going to marry him?'

'Oh, yes; I hope so.'

'You can't!' Paulina screamed, suddenly changing her tone for one of wild excitement. 'He has a wife already! *I* am his wife. He is my husband. His name is not Fielding. He is your own brother-in-law, Philip Vanthorpe!'

She screamed the words at Gabrielle. Her face, white with excitement, was close to Gabrielle's face. The whole scene, the suddenness, the presence, and the words of the furious woman—all these were too much for Gabrielle, and for the first time in her life she succumbed to the heroine's immemorial weakness. She seemed to hear the sound of a strange singing in her ears, the ceiling and floor of the room appeared to be in motion around her, and the whole world seemed to be falling on her; and then, at the

acme of this tumult of odd sensations, there was a sudden sweet sense of ease and relief; and, in short, she fainted. She would have fallen on the floor if it had not been that she was still leaning on Fielding's arm; and he caught her up and held her as if, she were a child.

'Look here'—he spoke to Paulina in a low tone, suffused with passion—'*you* stay here. If anything happens to *her*, I'll come back and kill you!'

He carried Gabrielle in his arms out of the room. In all his alarm for her, and with her for a burden, he contrived to get one hand free to take the key from the inside of the door, to draw the door after him, and to lock it on the outside. He had locked Paulina in. He had one distinct purpose in his mind: if any harm came to Gabrielle through that woman's means, he would come back there and kill her. She was locked in there meanwhile as a hostage and a prisoner.

Even the intrepid Paulina felt her heart fail her as she heard the key turn on the outside after his words of terrible warning. 'He would do it, too,' she thought. She could not help liking him all the better for it.

Fielding, for all his burden, literally ran up the stairs until he got to the Charltons' room, and there he knocked loudly at the door and called, 'Janet! Charlton! Janet!' until Charlton and Janet both opened the door, and then he staggered into the room.

'She has fainted, Janet,' he said in rapid tones, but with a marvellous composure. 'Some water, please. I'll lay her here on the sofa, and you will see to her, Janet. She has been frightened.'

Janet knelt on the ground beside Gabrielle and began to touch her forehead with cold water.

'Open the window, Robert,' she told her husband, who looked like one affrighted near to death; 'we must let a thorough draught come to her. If you would keep a little away, Mr. Fielding; we mustn't crowd her, please.'

The little woman was entirely mistress of the situation. The men only seemed out of place and in her way. She looked round kindly on Fielding, and said, in the tone of one who reassures a frightened child:

'It's nothing, Mr. Fielding; she will be well in half a moment.'

Fielding gave vent to a deep sigh of relief. He could have embraced Janet in the fervour of his gratefulness.

Janet was right. Hardly half a minute passed away before Gabrielle came to herself again. Her first sensation was a sort of humiliation at the thought that she had fainted when perhaps her

DONNA QUIXOTE.

old; but you will know in the end what a service I have done you, and you will thank me for it one day.'

'What are we to do?' Gabrielle asked in a low voice. 'This poor creature is mad.'

'I don't think it's madness,' Fielding said. 'I have a different cause. Look here, Mrs Clarkson——'

'My name is not Clarkson——'

'Well, Vanthorpe, then—whatever you like—it is your coming here and thrusting yourself on me. I came for you. You have taken your own course, and you know that this lady has already been only too kind to you. Do you continue to annoy and alarm her? What do you want? Do you come here? What good can you get by such folly?'

'I have come here because this is my proper home. I know well. Oh, yes, you are a very clever actor, as you say, and you can play the part of injured innocence very well; but I tell you what—the game is up. I didn't mind that you were going to get married—married!'—and she gave an hysterical laugh—'and I wasn't going to stand that. Oh, no! So the game is up; I'll not play my part in it.'

'Come away, Gabrielle,' said Fielding; 'this is no place for you. He now began to be convinced that she was right, and that all her various excitements had ended in madness. 'Come, come, see to this poor thing afterwards. Come, Gabrielle!'

'Come, Gabrielle,' Paulina said, mocking her. 'Come, Gabrielle! But I say, No, Gabrielle. Gabrielle! Stay in the room until she hears who you are, and what a fool you are for falling into. Gabrielle, do you know who that man is?'

'Yes,' Gabrielle answered quietly; 'I do.' Soon after she told her that Paulina was not mad.

'Are you going to marry him?'

'Oh, yes; I hope so.'

'You can't!' Paulina screamed, suddenly changed for one of wild excitement. 'He has a wife already. He has a wife. He is my husband. His name is not Fielding. His own brother-in-law, Philip Vanthorpe!'

She screamed the words at Gabrielle. Her excitement, was close to Gabrielle's face. The suddenness, the presence, and the words of the scene were too much for Gabrielle, and she succumbed to the heroine's impression. It seemed to her as if she heard the sound of a strange ceiling and floor of the room appeared to her, and the whole world seemed to be falling.

'Perhaps we shall; perhaps he will get into a more reasonable mood: Janet may prevail on him. Gabrielle, you never saw my rooms? You never even looked into them. Come, you must give one glance in now before you go, and leave a memory of brightness and love there. I shall always hold them in my recollection as if they were a shrine, because it was there I lived when I first knew you. I hope to be able to get Lefeuille to take them; they are much better than his; and if I could only suggest that he should give up that he is to have them on the same terms as if I were to make up the difference without his knowledge—— But I know that we are so ferociously independent, the two of us, that we cannot manage them.'

'You talk of ferocious independence, and yet you cannot accept a benefit at the hands of a wife.'

'Well, that's a different thing, and I possess. These are my rooms; this is the door. Come, you must give the place a look and consecrate the place for good old Lefeuille. That bell rings the breath of happiness in the old den that he never will let me account for to the end of his days. Apparently some one has just been lighting my lamp for me. How considerate.'

Fielding opened the door and held it open for Gabrielle to enter in. She had barely crossed the threshold when she saw that there was some one, a woman, already in the room. She turned round on her back; she assumed that it was some servant who had just been lighting the lamp. She entered the room. The woman

turned towards her, and Gabrielle saw that she was the wife of Paulina Vantborpe. Paulina was there, without her bonnet or cloak, like one at home.

'This is the old den, Gabrielle,' Fielding said as he led her into the room.

Gabrielle stepped back and laid her hand upon his arm to stay him from going any farther. It flashed across her mind that Paulina was dead. Fielding broke into an exclamation of surprise and stood at seeing the woman there.

'You didn't expect to see me, I know,' Paulina began in a low

'No, I am an unwelcome apparition. But I am

'You must stay here.'

'Is he here?' Fielding asked sternly. 'I can

'You must leave this place.'

'Why?'

'Not my room,' Fielding said.

'I am sorry for you, though—and I'll soon show you

'I am sorry for you. I said I

'I am sorry for you. I said I

'I am sorry for you. I said I

'I am sorry for you. I said I

lover was in some trouble or danger. Her first thought was of him; a pang of remorse, as if she had deserted him. She sat up suddenly and looked round for him. For a moment she did not know where she was; but before she recovered her senses clearly enough to recognise the Charltons she saw Fielding. She gave a little cry of joy and stretched out her hand to him. Fielding knelt on the ground beside her and caught her hand and pressed it again and again to his lips.

'I was foolish to be frightened in such a way,' she said in a low, fond tone to him; 'but I am quite happy now, as you are with me.' A whole story of love and confidence was told with fullest expression in the words. Fielding felt as if his heart might burst with gladness.

'Oh,—Janet!' Gabrielle said, recognising her; 'I did not know that I was here with you. I have been making rather a foolish exhibition of myself, Mr. Charlton; I never fainted before; I never thought people fainted except in novels.'

She was not saying anything about the cause of her alarm. Fielding wondered whether the shock to her nerves had been so great as to drive away for the time all recollection of what had happened before her faint. To Janet the whole thing was a mystery. Robert had his suspicions, and felt very miserable and cowardly.

Suddenly Gabrielle said very quietly:

'You were right, my friend'—she often spoke to him in this way, for the sake of that first time when, not having courage yet to use a closer and dearer expression, she had called her newly-confessed lover 'my friend'—'yes, you were right about that woman; and I was wrong. She is bad; there is no good in her. But she cannot trouble us much—can she, Clarkson?' She looked down into his eyes with such love and confidence that Clarkson almost felt his own eyes grow wet. Oh, what a moment that would have been for him if he were conscious of any secret thing that ought to come between him and that love and faith!

'She can give us no trouble,' he said, with pride as well as tenderness in his voice. 'Some little annoyance, I suppose. She is capable of anything in certain moods; and she is shameless; but we shall soon get rid of her. Listen: Charlton and Janet too. This thing will have to come out one time or other, and of course it need not be any secret even now from you two. That woman, Paulina Vanthorpe—I dare say you have heard of her—is getting up some foolery to annoy me. She insists that I am not myself at all, as the song says, but that I am Philip Vanthorpe and her husband.'

Janet broke into an inarticulate sound of pain and shame.

The fact that this was no news to her made her feel as if she were a party to the conspiracy. Robert Charlton muttered something about its being very strange ; very strange indeed. Fielding did not notice the manner of either. But Gabrielle did. It concerned her lover, all this story ; and she had keen eyes for anything that seemed to imply a doubt of him.

Characteristically, she leaped to a conclusion.

‘Did you know anything of this, Mr. Charlton?’ she asked, with lighting eyes. She suddenly remembered some former talk of his about Fielding.

‘I had heard something of it,’ Charlton answered slowly, and without venturing to meet her looks.

‘Had you heard of it, Janet?’ Gabrielle asked.

‘Oh, Mrs. Vanthorpe!’—Janet turned imploringly to Gabrielle—‘forgive me ; do, do forgive me ; I had heard it ; but I didn’t dare to say anything.’

‘I forbade my wife to speak of it, madame,’ Robert said, with an awkward effort at firmness ; ‘it wasn’t a thing to talk about—at least, until something certain came to be known of it.’

‘Then you know this woman, Charlton?’ Fielding said ; and he turned on Charlton with so stern an expression that poor Janet gave a little moan of alarm.

‘I have known her—yes ; that is, I have met her ;’ Charlton said. ‘She spoke of this matter.’

‘You knew of it, and you didn’t tell me—or tell this lady?’ Fielding said, pointing to Gabrielle. ‘I shouldn’t have expected that of you, Charlton.’

‘I wasn’t at liberty to speak.’

Fielding shrugged his shoulders :

‘Well, you are at liberty to speak to that woman below, I suppose—as she seems to be a friend of yours. Very good ; then, take this key with which I have locked your friend in my room. I told her why I locked her in there, and she can tell you if she likes. Let her out, and tell her she can go where she pleases, and say what she pleases ; and that the sooner she proclaims her story to the four corners of London, the better I shall be pleased. She will have to go on with it now—tell her that. Tell her, too, that I will never see her or speak to her again except in the presence of a good many witnesses and under the authority of a criminal court. Tell her that, Charlton ; and read up the laws relating to conspiracy meanwhile, and see what you make of them.’ Fielding flung the key upon the table.

‘Come, Gabrielle,’ he said ; ‘this is no place for you.’

An imploring look from Janet’s eyes met him.

'Was this well done, Janet?' he asked.

'Oh, Mr. Fielding! oh, Mrs. Vanthorpe!' the poor Janet pleaded; 'you would not blame me if you only knew; I would have died rather than do anything to annoy Mrs. Vanthorpe. I would, indeed.'

'I do believe you, Janet,' Gabrielle said kindly.

'And so do I, Janet,' Fielding said, with his habitual good-nature shining again in his eyes. 'You are a good and true woman, and I don't believe any harm of you.'

'Nor I of you, Mr. Fielding,' Janet declared with courageous fervour.

'Thank you, Janet. I do thank you really.'

'You all look on me as if I was a wretch and a villain and I don't know what all,' Charlton said, with tremulous lips. 'What have I done? How was I to know that the woman's story wasn't true?—how am I to know it now?'

'Ah, just so!' Fielding said contemptuously. 'Come, Gabrielle.'

Gabrielle was only too willing to go. Janet stopped the way for a moment.

'Won't you shake hands with me, Mrs. Vanthorpe, before you go? I should not feel quite so miserable if you did.'

Gabrielle drew the poor little woman towards her and kissed her on the forehead. She did not speak a word.

Fielding held out his hand to Janet. Gabrielle was already at the door. Charlton came up to Fielding and said, in a voice hardly audible for passion:

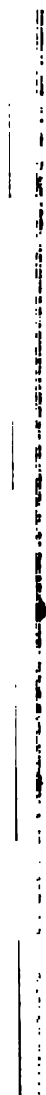
'Hadn't you better kiss her too? I dare say she would like it well enough.'

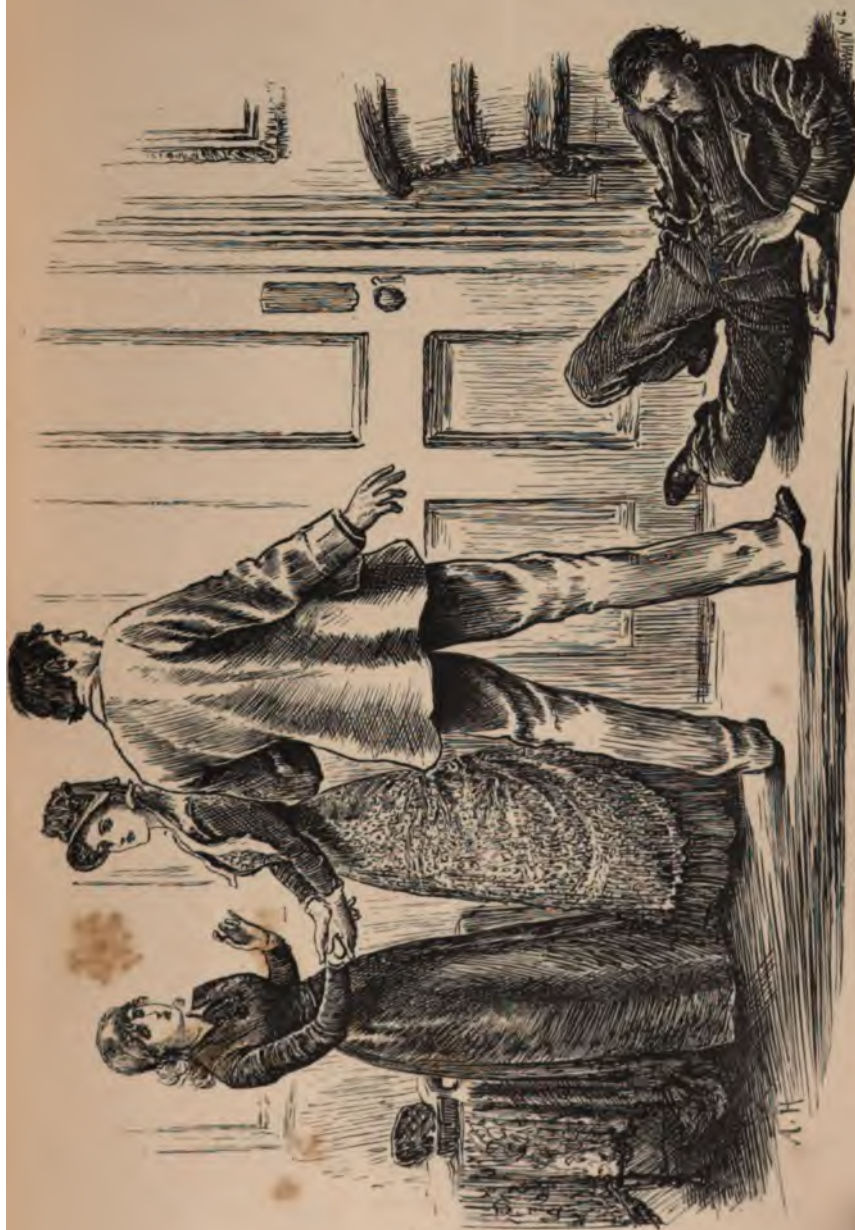
He was standing in Fielding's way. The young man caught him by the collar and flung him aside; tossed him out of his path as if he were some wretched bundle of rags. Fielding did not even look back to see whether he had fallen, or what he was likely to do. 'Come, Gabrielle,' he said once more; and giving her his hand, he conducted her down the darksome stairs. The evening had now gathered in, and all was gloom. As they passed the door of Fielding's room, they did not stop a moment or say a word about its present inmate. But on the threshold of the old house itself they stood for a moment.

'Look back upon it, Gabrielle,' Fielding said. 'It was here, just on this spot, I saw you for the first time; but I don't want ever to see it again. To-day I asked you to look in on my old place and consecrate it. It has been desecrated since then; and I don't wish ever to see it again.'

'Still, I shall always love it,' said Gabrielle, 'because I first saw







"He tossed him out of his path as if he were some wretched bundle of rags."

you there. I think I must have loved you even that first time—if I had only known.'

'Then—and now?'

'Ah! now, of course, I do know it. But there is nothing wonderful in that. It was strange, though—was it not, my friend?—that we should both have felt so suddenly drawn towards each other that very first time?'

'And you trust me always?' His voice had a tremor in it.

'Only try me,' was Gabrielle's quiet answer.

'Ah,' he said cheerily, 'you are a companion to go tiger-hunting with. The tiger has appeared, Gabrielle, and you are not inclined to run away. Come! shall we walk once or twice round this old square, in memory of the day when we walked round it before, and you asked me about poor Phil Vanthorpe, and you told me you were resolved to bring Wilberforce and myself together again?'

'Yes; and I told you that I would always be a friend to my friend.'

'You did.'

They walked round the little square, keeping on the strip of flags near the railings. They walked for a while without speaking. Gabrielle had not asked Fielding one single question about Paulina and her story. He understood her silence. She disdained to say a word which might even suggest that she needed any assurance of Paulina's falsehood from him.

CHAPTER XXXII.

'PERCHANCE, IAGO, I WILL NE'ER GO HOME.'

ROBERT CHARLTON had not fallen when Fielding, giving way to that one burst of temper, flung him aside. He only staggered a little and nearly came against Janet, who shrank from him and drew herself away into a corner of the room and sat in silence. She had heard his words to Fielding, and she despised him for them. She might have been in terror for herself. It was not easy to count on what a man like Robert might do at such a moment, and now she was alone with him. But somehow, she did not think about her personal safety; she had hardly any sense of fear. It did not seem to matter much what happened to her or to him now. They never could be the same; she never could love him any more. He had shown himself basely ungrateful to Gabrielle; he had helped that detestable woman in her vile conspiracy; he had been in constant communication with her before she

knew that there was such a creature in existence. Now he had humiliated and insulted his wife before Mr. Fielding; he had disgraced her almost as much as if he had publicly branded her with shame. If it pleased him to kill her now—why, let him do so, she said to herself. She did not see much use in living any longer, since it had come to this.

Still, she had a sort of dulled curiosity as to what her husband would do or say first. He appeared to be very quiet.

‘Light the lamp,’ he said. ‘And get the other lamp; and then take that key off the table and go down stairs and let that woman out.’

‘I’ll not go near her,’ Janet said, without looking at him.

‘Are you afraid of her? Do you think she would bite you?’

‘No; I’m not afraid of her; but I will have nothing to do with her. And if she comes up here, Robert, I’ll go out of the place. Mind that. I told you I would not have any more of her.’

Robert looked up at her angrily. She was trembling; but she was not afraid. At least, she was driven to desperation.

‘I don’t want her up here,’ he said, ‘any more than you do; but you will please to remember that this place is mine. Anyone I choose shall come into it. I am the master; not you.’

He took up the lamp and the key himself, and he went out of the room. He knew now that Janet despised him, and that she would always do so. But he hardly cared much for that now. He did not care whether she saw Fielding throw him aside or not. He too was desperate. He was not even afraid of Paulina, although one who proposed to confront that impetuous prisoner at such a moment might well feel some alarm. He turned the key in the lock and threw the door broadly open. Paulina stood at the farther end of the room, with her back to the chimneypiece and her hand clinging to Fielding’s heavy bronze lamp. Her attitude was like that of some furious *petroleuse* on whom the Versaillists had come, and who turned in despair for one last effort at resistance or revenge.

Charlton was in no humour for admiring picturesque attitudes. If he had been, he might have seen something in the stand and the look of Paulina that would have supplied a bold artist with a fine idea for a picture. Paulina had no shawl or cloak, and all the proportions of her really fine figure were clearly seen by the light of the lamp which stood before her on a small table, and on which she held her hand. Her eyes flashed what Carlyle calls ‘hell-fire.’ Her face, free for once of paint—at least, of fresh paint—was livid. The ravages of time as they showed in the *dim light* were only lines that lent to her face a certain wasted

appearance of severity and of something like dignity. Her too full lips were firmly pressed together, and gave the idea of sensuous strength collecting all its energy for some last ordeal. Clytemnestra, one might have thought, must have looked somewhat like this after the deed was done and she stood prepared to defy the consequences.

But Paulina's words were not by any means in keeping with the dignity of Clytemnestra. When she saw who was coming she took her hand from the heavy lamp to which she had been holding as her sole available weapon of defence, as Byron's Olympia clung to the great golden crucifix.

'Is it only you? Ain't there any more of you?'

Her whole manner collapsed with the change in the condition of things, and she was the vulgar Paulina Vanthorpe again.

'There's nobody else,' Charlton said sullenly, but a little relieved nevertheless to find that the Clytemnestra attitude was not meant for him. As he was coming down the stairs he had begun to think that Paulina might, perhaps, be in the habit of carrying a dagger in her garter ready for any emergency.

'Where's *he*?' she asked.

'Gone away with *her*. He sent me to let you out.'

'I am sorry the little woman was frightened,' Paulina said. 'She's a dear little angel, and that's a fact; and I'm awfully sorry to have to give her any pain. But in war, you know,' she added, assuming her grandiose way, 'women have got to suffer.'

'Besides,' Charlton said very slowly, 'if he is your husband already, you are only doing her a great service, you know.'

'Oh, bother!' was the somewhat unsatisfactory answer of the unsympathetic Paulina.

'Is he your husband?' Charlton asked sharply.

'Didn't you hear me say he was?'

'And you are prepared to prove all this—that he is Philip Vanthorpe, and all the rest of it?'

'You bet I am.'

'Remember,' Charlton said, with slow emphasis, 'it will be easy for him to show that he is not Philip Vanthorpe if he really isn't. You are running a very serious risk. He says he is determined to have the whole thing out now.'

Paulina laughed.

'Why, of course he must have the whole thing out. You don't suppose she is going to marry him until he can prove that he ain't Philip Vanthorpe and my husband? Not likely. How is he going to prove that, I want to know? I've got him in a hole, you'll see. He can't find any evidences nearer than New Orleans

anyhow, if he can find any there. By that time nobody can tell what may happen. We'll have a fine bit of fun, I tell you. I've played hell-and-tommy already with the lot of them.'

At that moment Charlton felt as certain that her story was all a falsehood and a concoction as he felt certain of his own existence. For a moment he was on the verge of a resolve to denounce her and leave her. She saw, perhaps, his wavering purpose.

'Now,' she said, 'you and I have got to go to work and fix things. I ain't much of a *litory* character myself, and you can use the pen much better than me. You must write a letter for me to old Mrs. Leven, and I'll copy it out the best I can. We want to tell her that her son's alive, and expose a villain, and that sort of thing—you know.'

'Do you know,' Charlton asked significantly, 'what you are liable to, if you fail in this? Do you know there are laws to punish; and he won't spare you?'

She faced him suddenly with blazing eyes.

'Man! do you know anything of women? Do you know anything even of your own little wife? Don't you know that we never care for anything that may happen when our blood is up? What do I care for laws and punishments? If I burst up this marriage business, and have my revenge on the pack of them, they may send me to Botany Bay if they like; I don't care.'

Paulina was not well-informed as to the changes that had taken place with regard to punishment by transportation.

'Yes, but if I assist you, I may be accused of conspiracy—he talked of prosecution for conspiracy.'

'What have you got to do with it? Don't I tell you my story, and ain't you impressed with the truth of it?—and what conspiracy is there in that? You are an honest man yourself, and you believe the word of an honest woman—where's the harm in that? Why, even supposing I wasn't an honest woman, what blame could there be to you for believing me? You wouldn't be the first man that was gammoned by a woman, I suppose?'

He hesitated. 'I don't quite see my way,' he said.

'You're a coward,' she replied fiercely. 'You haven't the spirit of a man or of a cat. You are afraid of him—although I told you enough about him to make even a coward pluck up a little bit of courage. Lord! what awful cowards you men are! and we women ain't afraid of anything, once our blood's up. Your little wife seems as meek as a mouse now; see if she doesn't fly in your face if you carry things too far. I can see already that she won't stand much more of you and me hugger-mugger together, and

of our trying to do anything to vex my fine Master Fielding, as he calls himself.'

The wretched Charlton mentally acknowledged with bitter pangs that there was truth in what she was now saying.

'Anyhow,' Paulina said, 'I've got you in my power, and I mean to make use of you. You have gone a good deal too far to turn back now, let me tell you. You have been in with me from the very first. Lord! how long is it since you first did me the honour to call on me in my modest abode on the Surrey side? Come along; you and me against any two. Sit down and make yourself comfortable; we'll prepare a rattling good letter for my beloved mother-in-law. We'll send a bombshell in among them. Won't the old Major look funny!'

'Are you going to stay here?' Charlton asked in amazement, as he saw Paulina setting chairs, and looking out pens, ink, and paper with the air of one who is thoroughly at home.

'Of course I am. Ain't this my husband's place of abode? Ain't possession nine points of the law? It will be a strong card in my hand that I have settled down in my husband's rooms, and that I refuse to go out of them. What's the fellow in the papers, *Punch* and that—that says, in French, you know, "Here I am, and here I stick?" Well, I'm him, as far as that's concerned. Here I am, and here I stick.'

'But the people who are in charge of this house?'

'I'll tell them. These are Mr. Fielding's apartments, ain't they? Very good—ain't I Mr. Fielding's wife?'

'But if they don't believe you?'

'You'll tell them it's all right,' said Paulina composedly. 'You are known to be a respectable person; and you'll say it's all right. That will be enough. Come, don't bother any more, but go ahead and write. Don't you see it's no end of points in my favour to write to the old lady from this very place, and to have the old Major and her come over and find me here?'

In a shuddering sort of way Robert admired her courage and her coolness. 'If one must be bad,' he thought, 'it is something at least to have nerves that are equal to one's purposes.' For his own part, he gave himself up now to her plans. Some of her words had made him morally, though not physically, as reckless as herself.

'I say,' Paulina suddenly exclaimed, 'can't we have something to drink? I'm awfully thirsty. I have money enough, if you'll send out for some brandy. And, I say, hadn't we better have the little wife down here; or let's go up to her? I don't think it *seems* quite proper, you know, Charlton, for you and me

to be alone together in this sort of way. People might be making remarks. Lord! the world is all scandal.'

'I have brandy upstairs,' Charlton said sullenly; 'and I'll go and ask Janet if she will come down, or we go up.'

He went upstairs to Janet. She was sitting in a chair at the window looking out upon the cheerless narrow street. The light of the lamp was very dim. She was not working. Her hands lay listlessly on her lap. She looked blankly round as her husband entered, but she said nothing. Something made him anxious to propitiate her now. He put on an air of good-humour.

'That's an extraordinary woman below, Janet,' he said. 'I don't quite know what to make of her; but she persists in her story, and declares she can prove every word of it. She is going to remain in the rooms below; they are her husband's, she says, and she has a right. Of course that's no affair of ours. All she wants me to do for her now is to write to Mrs. Leven and tell her story—and then let the Levens call on her for proofs. Of course I'm not in any way responsible for that. If she fails, she must take the consequences. But I think you had better come down, Janet; or let us have her up here. It would be more proper.'

'Robert, I'll not go near her,' Janet said, with a white face and lips that trembled. 'I'll not go near her, and I'll not stay in this room if she comes in. She is a vile woman; she is making up a lie, and she knows it—and you know it too, in your heart, Robert. Yes, you do—and you are helping her and prompting her all the same. I'm not very clever, but I can see that there isn't a word of truth in her story. I am ashamed of you that you would have anything to do with such a wretch as that.'

'Your partiality for Mr. Fielding blinds you a little,' he said, with a sneer, and throwing away the pitiful olive-branch of peace he had been pretending to hold out. 'Has he been here since? I wonder you are not jealous of Mrs. Vanthorpe, as he is so fond of her.'

She looked at him with a flush coming over her cold face. She made one or two efforts to speak, but could not get the words out. At last she said:

'You have spoken in that way too often, Robert; I have put up with a great deal; I'll not bear with any more of that.'

He muttered some bitter reply, and then he got a decanter with some brandy in it and went downstairs to write the letter for Paulina. He wrote the letter, which was all Paulina wanted him to do for her cause just then. She got rid of him soon, and he was glad to go. Paulina was very anxious to maintain every appearance of the strictest propriety.

When he left her, he did not go upstairs. He went out into the streets and wandered for hours, shamed, miserable, and hopeless, hating everyone, and burning with the conviction that all earth and humanity and the destinies had done him bitter wrong. When, long after midnight, he returned to his rooms, they were a solitude. Janet was gone. She had not left a written word behind her to say wherefore she had gone, or whither. But the rooms were empty; Janet was gone.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

'TIS A QUICK LIE: 'Twill AWAY AGAIN.'

MAJOR LEVEN sat in his study annotating a Blue-book and marking passages for extract from it. He was making up a formidable case against the Foreign Office, and he was full of the present effort and the joy of the coming strife. Suddenly his wife broke in upon him. Her appearance in that room was unusual. Mrs. Leven always considered it a part of the formal dignity of her position as a wife not to show any familiarity with the occupations of her husband, and not to follow him into his study. She thought it became man and wife to be habitually apart. Therefore, when Major Leven saw her enter, he knew that there was matter in it. She really looked alarmed and agitated to a degree that was uncommon indeed with her.

'George, look at that letter—read that!'

She handed him Paulina's letter, just come to hand. He read it over, growing more and more perturbed as he read. 'I don't understand this,' he said, and he applied himself to read it all over again. It was not very long. Mrs. Leven sat down and waited.

'Stuff!' Major Leven exclaimed at last, throwing the epistle contemptuously on the table.

'You don't believe it, George?'

'Not a word of it. It's all rubbish—it's a weak invention of the enemy,' he added, under the erroneous impression that he was quoting from the writings of William Shakespeare. 'Fancy this young fellow being your son, Philip Vanthorpe!'

'I don't know, George; my mind misgave me the first moment I saw him. I disliked him from the first, although then I knew no reason why.'

'But, good heavens! Constance, you don't really mean to say that you think your dislike of him is evidence that he must be your son?'

‘I do,’ Mrs. Leven answered solemnly. ‘I have reason to dislike my son—good reason; and the moment I first saw this man, I disliked him. George, I believe this woman’s story.’

Major Leven rose, and walked up and down the room. He was distressed by this evidence of implacable and what seemed to him unnatural feeling. He could understand hatred of a wicked minister or a plotting despot; but he could not understand private hates; above all, he could not understand a mother’s hatred for her son. He did not lecture her or scold her. They had married in such an impulsive way, and they had got on together so quietly, and as it were by virtue of a tacit compromise, making the best of the thing when done, that they hardly felt like husband and wife. Mrs. Leven’s sentiments, however much they pained him, seemed to Leven like the talk of some wrong-headed lady of his acquaintance which he could only regret and mildly deprecate, but for which he was not responsible, and which he could not attempt to control.

‘At any rate, Constance,’ he said, with some anger in his tone, ‘I can tell you that your instincts and presentiments in this case set you quite astray. This young man is the son of old Sir Jacob Fielding, and no one else. I knew him the very moment I first set eyes on him. I’m never mistaken in recognising faces.’

‘I always felt a doubt of him,’ Mrs. Leven said decisively. ‘Only the other day I told that mad girl myself that I thought that young man was just such another as my son Philip, and that I didn’t believe he was Sir Wilberforce Fielding’s brother.’

‘What do you propose to do?’ he asked abruptly.

‘I propose to do nothing, George.’

‘Hadn’t you better send for this young man?’

‘No, George. Why should I send for him? If he is not my son, I don’t want to see him; if he is my son, I want all the less to see him. I have nothing to do with the whole affair. But you, perhaps, who think more of that mad girl than I do—you might see her and advise her for her own sake to be careful now. She is standing on the brink of a precipice. If this man is my unfortunate son——’

‘But he isn’t, Constance, I can assure you.’

‘Whoever he is, this woman claims him for her husband.’

‘Yes, that’s quite true,’ Major Leven acknowledged, in much distress. ‘Gabrielle must be seen at once. This is a terrible business; I don’t believe a word of it; but still—one can’t be too careful; and she is so impetuous, and of course would believe anything *he said*, poor child. It’s perfectly awful all this. I know it’s only

a pack of lies. Good God, what a world it is! I'll go and see her at once.'

He put away his Blue-book, not without a half-sigh. He was just about to be very busy, and his heart was in the work. He had only just got fairly into it; and his thoughts in general moved a little slowly. When he was interrupted in any piece of work, he did not very easily find his place in it again. It is certain that in his righteous wrath against the inventors of false tales just then there was mingled a certain personal resentment because of his interrupted task. But he put the Blue-book aside and started forth to seek Gabrielle.

Soon the story was spread all through the little circle of which Lady Honeybell may be called the centre. It did not get talked about or even known very much among Lord Honeybell's friends. Lord Honeybell was then much engrossed by questions of local government and the adjustment of the burdens on land, and he had only a very vague idea as to who Gabrielle Vanthorpe was. He knew she was some favourite of his wife's, but he was not clear as to the difference, if any, between her and Miss Elvin; and when his wife, seeking for his advice as a practical man, had made that clear to him, he got it into his head that Professor Elvin, whom he had seen once or twice, was Fielding; and he bewildered Lady Honeybell by telling her that he really did *not* think that man could be a gentleman.

Four persons, besides Gabrielle, resolutely declined to believe Paulina's story. These were Sir Wilberforce Fielding, Major Leven, Mr. Lefussis, and Janet. Sir Wilberforce turned a deaf ear to the whole affair. He never could be got to say more than 'My brother Clarkson? Why, of course, he is my brother Clarkson. Stuff and nonsense! stuff and nonsense!' Major Leven merely repeated that he knew Clarkson the first moment he saw him to be old Sir Jacob Fielding's son. Lefussis declared that Mr. Clarkson Fielding was a gentleman and a man of honour, 'and my esteemed friend,' and that he would take his word against the oaths of all the painted ladies the Haymarket or other place could turn out. In the mean time, he made it a point to leave his card on Fielding about twice a day, in token of undiminished confidence and regard.

But there was not much in the instinctive conviction of Mr. Lefussis to satisfy sceptics; and on the whole the testimony of Sir Wilberforce made rather for Paulina's story than against it. For Sir Wilberforce had often said that he should never have known Clarkson Fielding for his brother; and this very fact helped to make Major Leven's testimony of little value. How could Major

Leven, it was pertinently asked, have seen so striking a likeness to old Sir Jacob Fielding where Sir Jacob's eldest son could see none? This criticism told very effectively with many persons. It had in reality about as much value in it as the argument that it is impossible John can read the figures on the steeple-clock with his naked eye, when James has to put on spectacles to make them out. It may have chanced to some of the readers of this story to revisit after many years of absence some place familiar to their youth. Such persons will, perhaps, have observed, as this writer has had occasion to do, that among the old acquaintances whom one rejoins there are two sets of what may be called extremists in the matter of recognition. There are those who know you at the first glance and positively affirm that they cannot see the slightest change in you; and there are those who declare that they should never have known you again, and that they cannot even now trace the slightest resemblance in your features and manner to the friend whom they knew so well long ago. The writer is personally acquainted with two distinct cases in which the identity of a brother was doubted by those who were nearest of kin to him, and ought to have known him best, while mere friends recognised him at once, and wondered that there could be any doubt about the matter.

The sceptics in the case of Clarkson Fielding knocked all argument down by reminding people triumphantly that Sir Wilberforce never recognised the man who called him brother, and simply took him on trust. 'You know what sort of man Sir Wilberforce is,' some sagacious persons said. 'His mind is all taken up with drain-pipes and plans of ventilation. If you or I went boldly up to him and claimed to be his brother, he would have said, 'Dare say you are. How are you? Hope you are well.' Some ladies added that 'the young man was presented to Sir Wilberforce by that pretty Mrs. Vanthorpe, and Sir Wilberforce was awfully in love with her. He would have taken the Claimant for his brother, if Mrs. Vanthorpe had only asked him.'

Janet, indeed, might have given some evidence that would have borne more directly on the question. She could have told how she had seen Paulina and her husband making up the case against Fielding time after time, and that she had noticed how adroitly Paulina modified her statement, improved, rounded it, and adapted it to symmetry and harmony in accordance with the slightest suggested hints or questions of Robert Charlton. But Janet could hardly be called upon to give testimony even in private bearing thus distinctly, if not directly, against her own husband; and in any case not many persons would have relied upon her judgment or her powers of observation; and many would assuredly have said

that she was now furious against her husband, and glad to say anything to his discredit.

On the whole, then, the case stood thus as it was presented to the outer world. Only one person professed to have recognised the man calling himself Clarkson Fielding as the son of old Sir Jacob Fielding. Sir Wilberforce did not recognise him. Gabrielle Vanthorpe was convinced, when she saw him first, that he was not Clarkson Fielding, but Philip Vanthorpe. She had sent for him to come to her house under the full conviction that he was the brother of her dead husband. Every act done by him since his coming to London was more consistent with the assumption that he was Philip Vanthorpe than that he was Clarkson Fielding. He had always carefully kept away from Sir Wilberforce Fielding until Gabrielle undertook to bring them together, and insisted on doing so. Then, with her to stand his sponsor on the first introduction, he had ventured to go. He had come between Sir Wilberforce and his intended marriage; for of course, as the knowing people said, it would never suit him to have the owner of the property married. He had been known by various names in various parts of the world; but they were names that would rather have served as a means of identification than a means of disguise to Clarkson Fielding. He had been known as Mr. Clarkson; he had been known as Mr. Selbridge. But Clarkson was the Christian name of the younger Fielding; Selbridge was his mother's name. What young man endeavouring to conceal his identity for any purpose would have taken these names? But they would have served the purpose of Philip Vanthorpe admirably; and Philip Vanthorpe had confessedly been a close friend of Clarkson Fielding. Again, it was certain that Clarkson Fielding had quarrelled with his father, in the first instance, because Sir Jacob had imposed the name of Clarkson on him. Was it likely that he would make the name more conspicuously than ever his own?

The balance of opinion, therefore, leaned heavily against Clarkson Fielding and in favour of Paulina's story. Paulina, too, had the great advantage of telling it for the most part in her own way. She did not say much about the hostility Fielding had always displayed towards her, and the manner in which he had endeavoured to rescue Gabrielle from any companionship with her. When she had to touch on all this part of the case, she explained it her own way, after a fashion we have already described, and which, indeed, had been suggested by one or two questions from Charlton.

Gabrielle, of course, never spoke on the subject to any but her most intimate friends, who were very few. One of these was Lady Honeybell.

.

‘I think, Lady Honeybell, I had better go back to my own house while all this is going on ; it is my own house still.’

‘Why should you do that, my dear young woman ? You are better here, I think. It would never do for you to be living alone in that way while all this, as you say, is going on, No, no ; I have got you here, and here for the present I mean to keep you. I’ll do what your mother would do, if you had one.’

‘But I am afraid I bring annoyance on you and disturb you ; and then, Lady Honeybell, I am sometimes not quite sure that you are entirely with me in this.’

‘Entirely with you in what ?’

‘Well, of course I can’t blame you ; I can’t wonder ; you don’t know him as I do ; you can’t feel to him as I do——’

‘Eh, surely no,’ Lady Honeybell gravely admitted.

‘And I am sometimes afraid that you join with the people who think I am unwise and doing wrong, and who don’t believe in him as I do—as I do.’

‘My dear,’ Lady Honeybell answered soothingly, ‘I should be anxious to believe everything you believed and to like everyone you liked, especially at a time like this. But it is quite enough for me in this case that Sir Wilberforce Fielding believes in this young man, and that Major Leven is positive on the subject...I put you out of the question—your opinions, I mean ; you are not in a condition to judge. But I am satisfied with the declarations of these men ; I don’t think the word of that woman counts for anything. But still I think you are bound in duty to yourself to be very careful how you act ; and you are not at all the woman to be cautious in anything. That is why I am glad I have you safely here. We must have no marryings and no engagements while this thing is unsettled.’

‘If he thought I had any doubt of him——’ Gabrielle began, with tears in her eyes.

‘But, my dear young woman, goodness gracious ! how could he possibly think you had any doubt of him ? Why, you go on to him as though you thought ten thousand times more of him than ever.’

‘So I do, Lady Honeybell,’ Gabrielle said warmly.

Gabrielle sickened at the whole scandal. She was made miserable by the thought of her lover being called on to prove anything to anybody. It was enough for her that he said ‘This is so ;’ she would have had it enough for all the world besides. At least, she would have wished that he and she could act with absolute indifference to the opinion of the rest of the world. What did it matter to them, she often thought, if a wicked woman chose to invent monstrous lies ? She was hardly patient with Major Leven, for all

his kindness, when he came to implore her to have the whole scandal disposed of once for all before she entered into any engagement with Fielding. She was almost inclined to complain of Fielding himself, because he was evidently determined to act as Major Leven advised her to act, and have the whole thing disposed of before he allowed Gabrielle to stand too far committed to him in the eyes of the world. Fielding did not very often come to see her these days. They were very melancholy days to Gabrielle. The sweet sanctity of their love seemed to her to have been cruelly profaned by all this vulgar, hideous controversy, this prospect of fending and proving. These days we now speak of were very few. At an ordinary time they would have passed so unnoticed away that before long Gabrielle would have ceased to have any idea of their number. But now they seemed to make up a whole season of melancholy, impatience, anxiety, and pain.

Gabrielle was distracted from the thought of her own trouble when Mrs. Bramble came one day to tell her that Janet was with her; that she had left her husband, and declared she would not go back to him. He had been very bad to her, Mrs. Bramble said; although Janet had not explained to her exactly what it was all about.

'She hasn't cared about him this long time,' Mrs. Bramble went on to say. 'I knew it, though she wouldn't let on even to me. I know he must have been very bad to turn her so against him. She used to be fond of him once; and she's such a good girl. I wish she had never seen him; and so does she now.'

'I'll go to see her,' Gabrielle said. 'Perhaps she'll tell me. It seems a dreadful thing her leaving her husband in that way; but I know it can't be Janet's fault. I'll go to her at once.'

But Mrs. Bramble explained that Janet would not see anyone just yet; that she had begged to be left quite alone for the present; and had even said that she could not yet open her mind to Mrs. Vanthorpe. 'And she loves you, ma'am, more than anyone else in the world—now.'

Gabrielle was not astonished to find that something had gone wrong between Janet and her husband. She thought with melancholy reflection of the days when first she used to go to see them, and of the schemes she had for making them happy. How many dream-blossoms had she nourished; how few had ever ripened!

Her heart leaped up with joy one evening when her lover came to see her. He came so seldom now! He was so careful on her account! He kept away almost as if he had some fever in his veins that his mere presence might impart to her. And she—why, if there were such a fever, she would have liked to share it; at least,

she would have welcomed the risk rather than lose an hour of his presence.' 'I should never do to be a man,' Gabrielle thought; 'I never could be so prudent and considerate even for one I loved.'

'Gabrielle,' Fielding said, 'we begin to see our way at last. We can only meet this thing in one way. Major Leven and I are going out to New Orleans at once. We shall follow the track of poor Philip Vanthorpe, and get among those who knew him and knew me; and then we'll come back and crush this ridiculous story at once. Just now we can't do anything. This unfortunate woman hasn't put herself directly in the way of a prosecution yet; and even if she did, we haven't the means of putting her story completely down. The whole thing is only a farce; but for our own sakes we must allow it to have for the time the proportions of a melodrama.' He said some words of encouragement and love to her; told her how the time would be short until he came back again; put on a cheery face, and declared that he knew she had courage for anything.

Even he was for a moment surprised to see how her eyes lighted and her cheeks got colour. In place of looking depressed, she had become all radiant. She felt as if a burden of stone were raised off her heart. For she too saw her way now. She had formed a resolution, and she was happy.

(To be continued.)





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